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Concept Art, Digital & Matte Painting Magazine
Issue 053 May 2010



Interview

Yang Xueguo



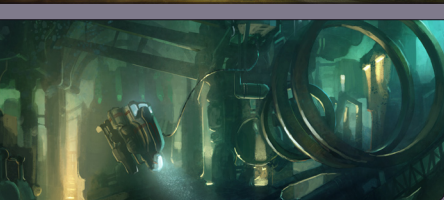
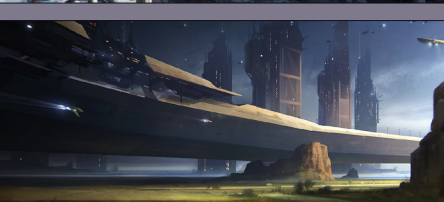
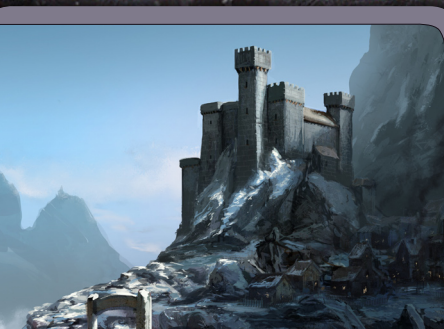
Articles

Sketchbook of Jama Jurabaev



The Gallery

Kerem Beyit, Abraao Lucas and
Ignacio Bazan Iazcano, plus more!



SEWER DWELLING MONSTER

FANTASY CASTLES & FUTURISTIC CITIES

Medieval Mountain Castle and City!

Alex Broeckel takes us high into the mountains, and explains how he created his image for the **Painting Fantasy Medieval Scenes** tutorial.

Sky Scrapers and Flying Traffic

Jama Jurabaev unleashes his imagination as he explains how he created his environment in the **Painting Futuristic Cities** tutorial series.

Steampunk Environments

Chee Ming Wong continues his tour of Steam World and stops off in the realm of the Diesel Punk Engineers.

Sewer Monster

Lurking in the depths of the sewers, we discover how **Andrei Pervukhin** created his fearsome creature for the **Painting Monsters** tutorial.



Editorial

Welcome to the May issue of 2DArtist. We hope you all enjoyed the excellent April issue of 2DArtist and are looking forward to another great instalment of tutorials from some of the best 2D digital Artists around.

Some of the regular readers of 2DArtist will remember a great making of a few months back for an image called The Beast by **Jama Jurabaev**. Well this

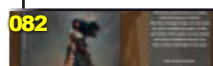
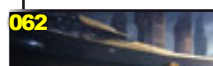
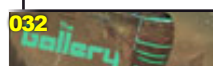
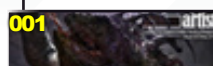
month Jama is back with not one, but two articles. Firstly Jama gives us an insight into how he sketches out his work before applying color in this month's sketchbook. Jama shows us how he creates the base for an image by using black and the grey scale to explore shapes and lighting. Jama's second article this month gives us an opportunity to see how he puts his methods into practice as he talks us through Painting a Futuristic City. Jama has a great way of building a scene and exploring all options to make sure he has the composition he desires. Follow his interesting techniques as he talks us through creating flying traffic around his Futuristic City.

This month, 2DArtist have had the privilege of interviewing the fantastic surreal artist **Yang Xueguo**. Yang talks about the path he took to become an art teacher at a university in China, and goes into detail telling us why he chooses to paint surreal subjects rather than real life topics. Yang also shares with us a selection of his work that is unlike anything you would have probably seen before so I recommend taking a look.

This month's Monster comes from an excellent artist that has had work featured in our online and magazine galleries in the last few months **Andrei Pervukhin**. Andrei shows us and shares with us his selection of brushes, and tells us how he used them to paint his excellent Sewer Dwelling swamp monster. We also get an insight into how he explores the subject with his initial sketches and then uses them in his painting to make his excellent image that has been used on the cover of this issue. In this month's Fantasy Medieval Scene we are taken high into the mountains to look from a distance at a Castle surrounded by a mountain city. The artist that brings the scene to life this month is **Alex Broeckel**. Alex shows us some great techniques for ensuring that you maintain depth in your image and how to explore your painting to get the most from it by looking at it from different angles.

For those of you that have been enjoying the tour of the steampunk world with **Chee Ming Wong** we have a great treat for you this month as we are taken into the engineering sector. Chee talks us through making a scene dramatic by using up lighting and how to create an underwater environment.

What a feast of inspiring content we have for you this month, and as if that wasn't enough we also have a making of by **Jone L. Leung**, and some great gallery images from **Kerem Beyit**, **Ignacio Bazan Lazcano**, **Neil Maccormack** and many more. Enjoy!



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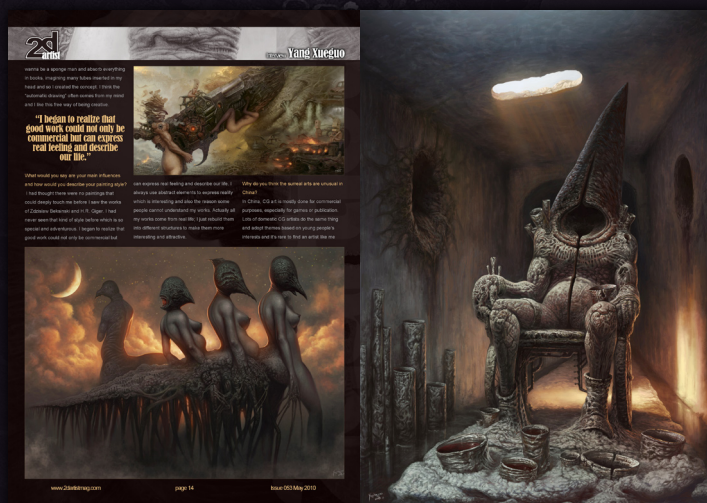


Image by Yang Xueguo



Get the most out of your Magazine!

If you're having problems viewing the double-page spreads that we feature in this magazine, follow this handy little guide on how to set up your PDF reader!



Setting up your PDF reader

For optimum viewing of the magazine it is recommended that you have the latest Acrobat Reader installed.

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To view the many double-page spreads featured in 2D Artist magazine, you can set the reader to display 'two-up', which will show double-page spreads as one large landscape image:

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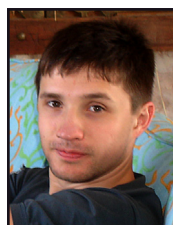
Every month many artists around the world contribute to **3DCreative** and **2DArtist** magazines. Here you can find out a bit more about them! If you would like to be a part of **3DCreative** or **2DArtist** magazine, please contact: simon@3dtotal.com



Yang Xueguo

Yang Xueguo comes from Kunming, China. He started painting when he was a little boy and now is an art teacher at an art university. After graduating from university he decided to engage in 3D animation and digital painting. Yang prefers fantasy and surreal arts, and usually paints digitally, but plans to do some oil painting in the future.

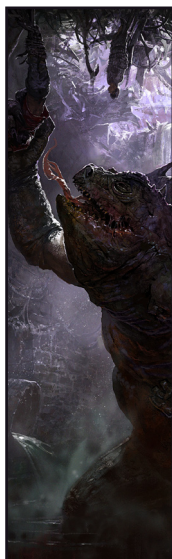
<http://seedsfromhell.blogspot.com>
blur1977@126.com



Andrei Pervukhin

Andrei Pervukhin is a 25 year old Russian artist who in 2007 graduated from the Veronezh art College. Andrei has worked as an illustrator for a Moscow based publisher and does traditional and digital artwork. He has been doing digital artwork for 2 years. In his spare time he enjoys boxing, watching movies and playing computer games.

<http://pervandr.deviantart.com/gallery/>
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Jama Jurabaev

After Jama's graduation as an aerospace engineer in 2004 he never thought that his life will be related with digital art. But now he is working as a concept artist, and digital art has totally consumed his life.

He has done a lot of illustrations for advertising agencies but now is searching for serious projects in the game or film industry.

<http://jamajurabaev.deviantart.com>
jama_art@tag.tj



Alex Broeckel

is a freelance Concept Artist and Illustrator. With a background of 12+ years as a professional 3d artist he spent most of his time building and lighting digital environments for the entertainment industry. He worked as a lighting TD on movies like Harry Potter and the Prisoner of Azkaban and Roman Polanski's Oliver Twist before he decided to become a Concept Artist.

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Would You Like To Contribute To 3DCreative Or 2DArtist Magazines?

We are always looking for tutorial artists, gallery submissions, potential interviewees, 'making of' writers, and more. For more information, please send a link to your work to: simon@3dtotal.com

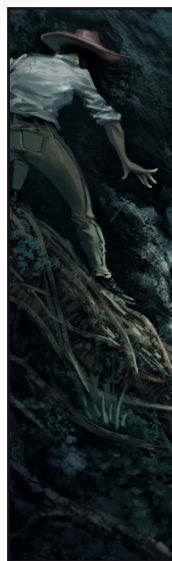
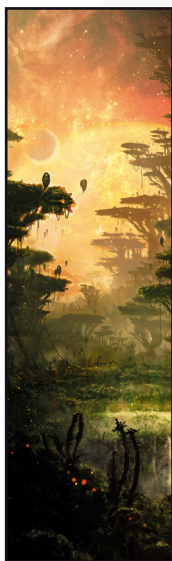


Dr. Chee Ming Wong

Dr. Wong is both a visual imagineer & director of Opus Artz Ltd and has over 10 years of creative visualization and industrial design experience, working with a diverse range of game & animation developers worldwide.

His projects have included The Edge of Twilight, External Enviromental Art Consultant on Bioshock 2 and Senior Concept Artist and Visual Lead for the MMO "Infinity: The Quest For Earth".

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Jone L. Leung

Jone Leung is a freelance artist from New York who began illustrating during his senior year of college. He is inspired by imaginative media interrelated to one another such as games, film, fantasy, horror, comics, animation, and sci-fi. Jone enjoys dealing with everything from coming up with ideas, the conceptual/sketching phase, and finally executing finished art. His work can be seen at:

<http://www.lwcl.darkfathom.com/>
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Gate of Chaos by Yang Xueguo

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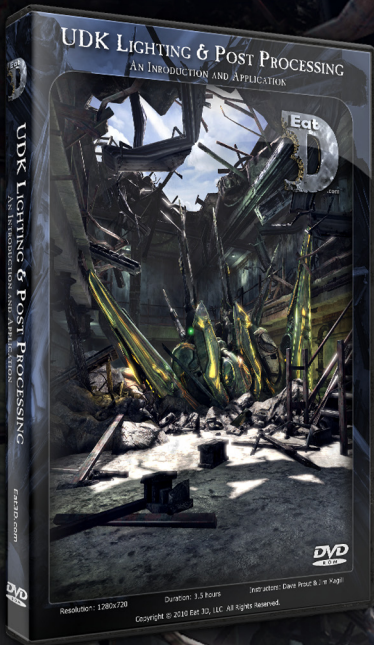
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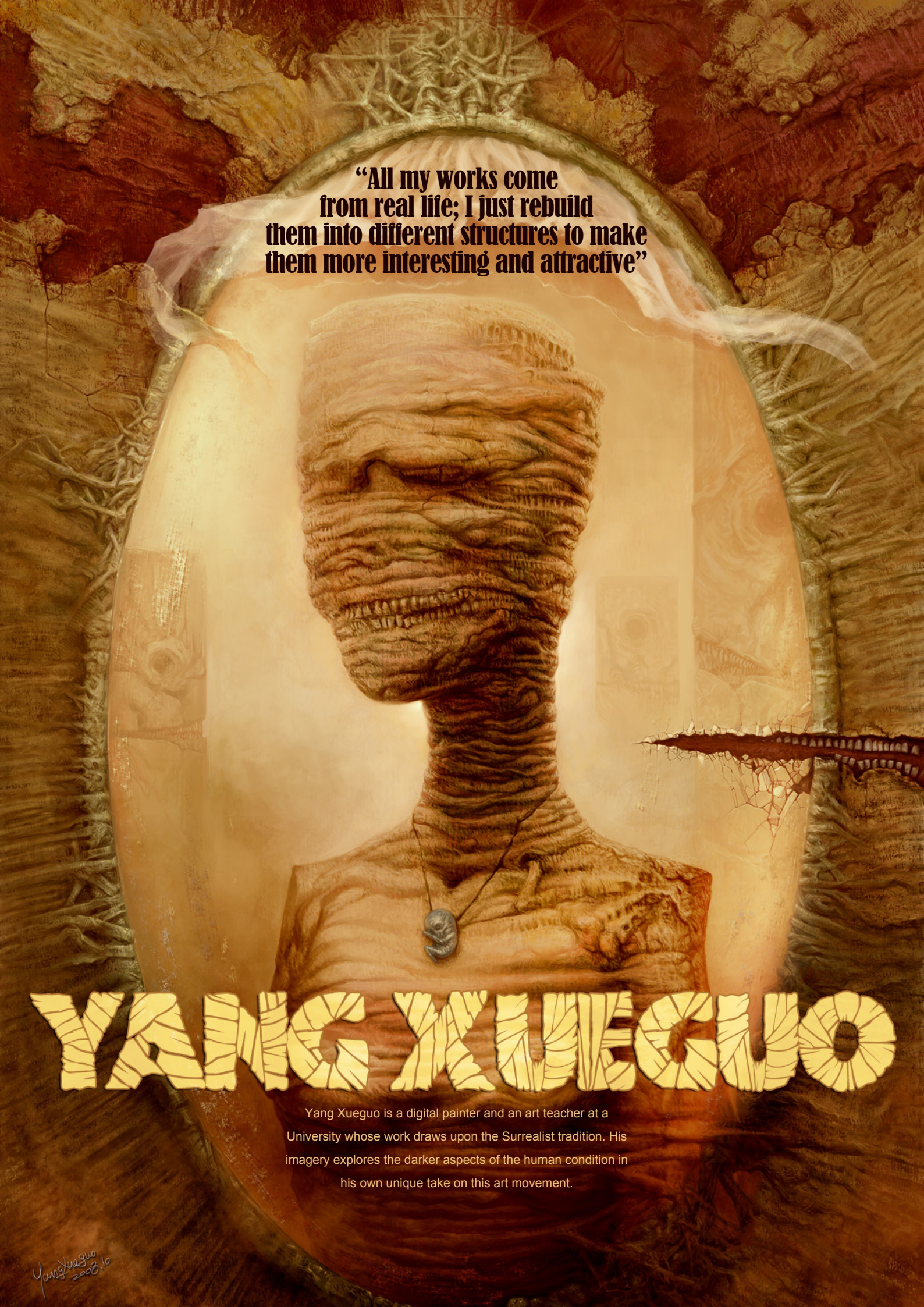
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**“All my works come
from real life; I just rebuild
them into different structures to make
them more interesting and attractive”**

YANG XUEGUO

Yang Xueguo is a digital painter and an art teacher at a University whose work draws upon the Surrealist tradition. His imagery explores the darker aspects of the human condition in his own unique take on this art movement.

Interview with VYang Xueguo

Can you tell us a little about your background and how you developed an interest in digital painting?

Hi, my name is Yang Xueguo. I come from Kunming, the Spring City in South West China. I liked painting very much when I was a little boy and now I'm an art teacher in the art university in Yunnan Province. I studied architectural design in university which failed to maintain my interest and I spent more time drawing comics and game characters. After graduating from university, I decided to engage in 3D animation and digital painting. At that time, there was no professional training or way of learning digital art in my city or even in China and the only way was to study it by myself. I prefer Fantasy and Surreal art and usually use the computer to create works but hope to engage in oil painting or other media in the near future.

What is it that attracts you to oil painting and what do you think will be the hardest things to learn after working digitally?

In fact the CG art in China has never been accepted by mainstream art circles. The



majority of people have no idea what CG art is and even a large number of artists believe that CG art is just an image taken from camera and easily manipulated by computer. They think CG is just for commercial purposes with a very low value. The common idea is that if you want to

practice CG art as a purely creative venture then you will die from earning no money. Oil painting has been my dream since I was a little boy and I love this and CG art. Fortunately I'm a teacher in a university and CG is not my only livelihood so I have enough of a reason to do something I love.



There is a definite Surrealist theme running through your imagery but where do you think this stems from and what is it about this art movement that fascinates you?

I think the first thing good art work should do is attract those who look at it. If the artist only pays attention to describing ordinary life, it may make the audience feel bored. On the other hand, if art work shows content far from ordinary or real life, it cannot be so easily understood. Surrealism is a good solution as all the ideas come from real life as well as beyond life.

Your work is very meticulous in its detail. Do you sketch out your characters and compositions on paper beforehand or do you develop them digitally?

Usually I start a work digitally once I have finished the preliminary outline. Sometimes I

sketch some part of the work on paper. I carry a sketchbook with me which is convenient for sketching anywhere and anytime once I have an idea which I then scan into the computer and continue to work on further. "Concrete 7" for example follows the above-mentioned process.

"I have a quantity of ideas deriving from dreams and daily works."

In view of Surrealism having an intrinsic link to dreams and the unconscious, do you ever practice automatic drawing as a way of generating imagery?

I have a quantity of ideas deriving from dreams and daily works. Sometimes I "see something" when I'm driving. For example, the "Concrete7" shows many tubes in man's head.

My friends ask me about what prompted the image and I tell them I was preparing for public examinations, which was a hard time for me. I





Yamashiro
200.12



Yang Luo
2009.6



wanna be a sponge man and absorb everything in books, imagining many tubes inserted in my head and so I created the concept. I think the "automatic drawing" often comes from my mind and I like this free way of being creative.

"I began to realize that good work could not only be commercial but can express real feeling and describe our life."

What would you say are your main influences and how would you describe your painting style?

I had thought there were no paintings that could deeply touch me before I saw the works of Zdzislaw Beksinski and H.R. Giger. I had never seen that kind of style before which is so special and adventurous. I began to realize that good work could not only be commercial but



can express real feeling and describe our life. I always use abstract elements to express reality which is interesting and also the reason some people cannot understand my works. Actually all my works come from real life; I just rebuild them into different structures to make them more interesting and attractive.

Why do you think the surreal arts are unusual in China?

In China, CG art is mostly done for commercial purposes, especially for games or publication. Lots of domestic CG artists do the same thing and adopt themes based on young people's interests and it's rare to find an artist like me







Yang Xueguo
2007.4





who creates art works out of love and use it to investigate a question or convey a concept. I understand that artists need money to make a living which is a helpless fact in our current society. Surreal art is rarely understood by the public because it's not a traditional art form in Chinese art history and it contains many connotations far removed from the imagination of the general public.

“In China, people would rather pay 1000 USD to buy a normal oil painting than buy a CG print priced a little bit higher than a music CD”

I believe that the motive behind a lot of successful CG art is in fact commercial, but if you were to produce a series of oil paintings would you try and exhibit these in a gallery, and how do you feel they would compare with digital prints in such a context?

Yes, I will. In fact, I have successfully planned and held two art exhibitions called “Wonder”

over the past four years in my city, which focused on the theme of “CG art talking with traditional art”. We invited lots of domestic CG artists and traditional artists to show their works together. The purpose was to provide

an opportunity to let CG, a different kind of art become acquainted with the public and to enhance the CG social situation. I'm planning a new CG exhibition in May 2010.



I think oil painting has more vitality and is more valuable to collectors than CG art. You know that most CG art is the result of "save as" and people prefer to keep them on their hard disc rather than the wall, which causes its short art

life. In China, people would rather pay 1000 USD to buy a normal oil painting than buy a CG print priced a little bit higher than a music CD, even though the CG art is more brilliant than oils. I think there is no difference between

them both. In some countries CG art is regarded as one kind of art form which means an equal platform should be set for both.

If you could choose one painting to hang on your wall, what would it be and why?

It's not easy to choose.... Perhaps I will choose "Long Past Civilization". It's my first work that I feel was successful and satisfactory which determined my future art direction.

"Art is an instrument and with it I hope to arouse more consideration from the audience."

The titles of your works are somewhat dark and pessimistic. How does this relate to Surrealism and to your interests in general?

I want to say that my works honestly reflect my life, and I always think a work with dark connotations can more deeply touch people's hearts as opposed to "brighter" work which also happens to be one of my main creative guides.

Do you feel that darker subject matter is more surreal on the whole? and why do you think this can affect people more deeply than say a more optimistic topic?

Yes I do, such as "pain". People can easily forget pain during happy times but cannot forget pain when they suffer it, even though they want forget it immediately. Art is an instrument and with it I hope to arouse more consideration from the audience so that they may spend some time to think and reflect when they face it.



Yang Xueguo

For more work by this artist please visit

<http://hi.baidu.com/blur1977>

or contact them at

yangxueguo@gmail.com

Interviewed By : Richard Tilbury



Yanshuo
2008.10


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**"I want to be an explorer and
discover unknown worlds
and creatures for myself."**

SKETCHBOOK OF JAMA JURABAEV

Step inside the amazing creative mind of Jama Jurabaev this month's Sketchbook artist. Jama shows us how he sketches his great environments in black and white, and shows us how he as a self taught artist has developed his own set of processes to make his outstanding art work.

SKETCHBOOK OF JAMA JURABAEV

INTRODUCTION

Looking through those amazing sketchbooks of other people on the internet I realize that I still don't have a unified style of sketching. My sketchbook contains different techniques that I use to drop down a main idea on a blank canvas, but I think these methods drive me to explore and to work with unusual forms and strange solutions.

I work a lot with traditional media. Pencil, pen, markers... I think working with traditional media makes my hands and mind more confident at drawing because there is no undo button, and I tend not to use an eraser at all. Traditional media needs a bit more organization and attention if you are planning to go for a finished painting at least it does for me. And I have huge respect for those people who have created masterpieces working in traditional media, but working in digital media is a great challenge too. It allows me to experiment a lot.

My main tool in digital sketching is Photoshop. Combining all of those wonderful tools can lead me to interesting concepts. We are just at the beginning of a digital art era.

Traditional methods of drawing were polished for centuries. I wonder how far we can go with digital media? The thought excites me!

Coming to the subject of my sketches, I tend to work much more on the areas that I am not so good at the moment. If I feel confident in drawing straight shapes and mechanical stuff I try to practice in drawing more curvy and organic shapes. I want to be an explorer and discover unknown worlds and creatures for myself. Drawing for me is like seeing those shapes in the clouds. As soon as I get



Fig.01

rid of the blank canvas shapes start to form in my head. I see the story and try to develop it.

Anyway,

Take a nice seat and enjoy the journey through several worlds that I've created in the recent past.

STEAMPUNK CHALLENGE

This is the set of images I created for the Steampunk challenge on cgsociety.org. Actually at the beginning of this challenge I had no

idea what I was going to create, so I started to experiment in a very abstract way. I had in my mind some huge steam driven machines, even steam driven cities. Keeping this in mind I created several B/W sketches. Usually if I am searching for interesting subjects I tend to work in black and white. Looking at these sketches now, I think: Wow, it was a nice journey.

Starting with huge steam machinery (Fig.01) I traveled through different locations of my steam universe.

Steam temples (Fig.02)

Steam factories (Fig.03 and Fig.04).

Somewhere in between I had a chance to visit some other worlds (Fig.05)

My journey ended up on Atlantis, the whole continent was driven with a enormous steam core, and I was the first person who saw how Atlantis left our world using its steam engines (Fig.06).



That is why nobody will ever find the remains of this sophisticated civilization. It may sound like complete craziness, but this is the way I like to explore unknown worlds and to track some interesting stories that I start to see in my sketches.



HAUNTED HOUSE

Here is the set of sketches that I created for the "Hauntings" matte painting contest on CGtantra forums. In my opinion any matte painting needs to be a well organized compositional sketch to be successful. That is why I decided to spend some time to find something interesting. Sometimes people go too crazy just to show something different and original, but in this case I decided to stick with classics. I had in my mind some kind of abandoned place in the middle of a swamp. I took my watercolors and dropped some simple shapes on several pieces of paper (Fig.07). I then scanned them all and started to play with them in Photoshop. Using layer modes I ended up with these two concepts. (Fig.08)

Starting your work with abstract shapes doesn't mean that you don't have any ideas of what to paint. I was thinking about a haunted house and I pulled it from those abstracts sketches and also got another interesting concept with a castle as a bonus. Using that sketch it was much easier for me to create the final matte painting.

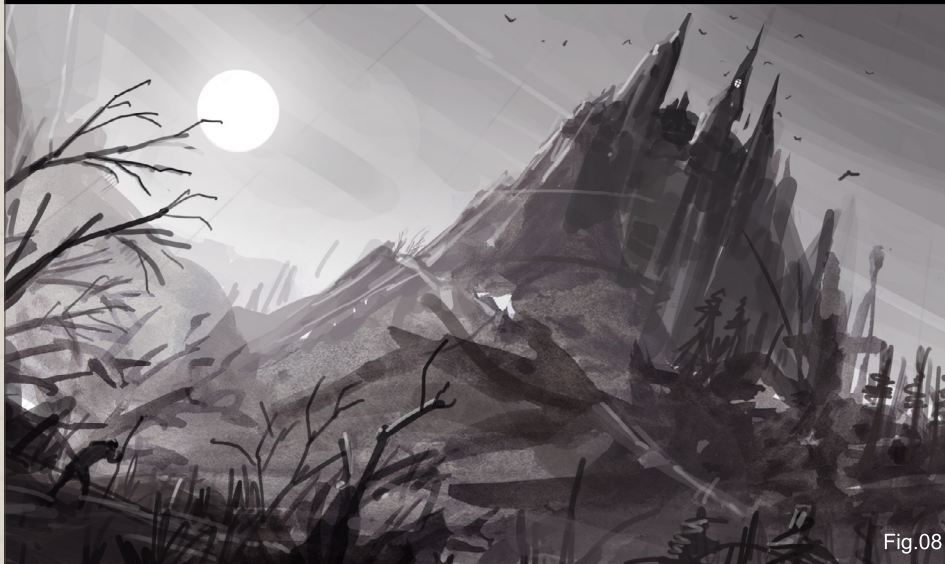
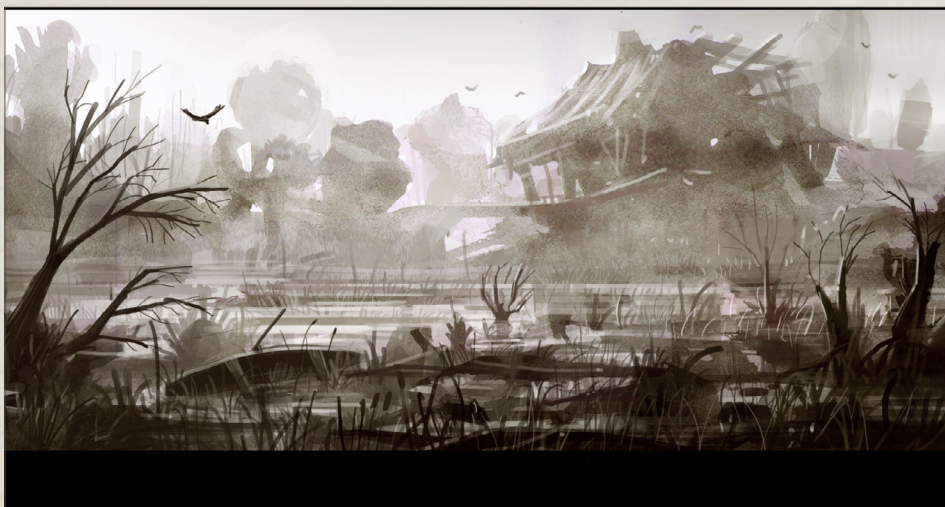


Fig.07

Fig.08



Fig.09

“AVATAR” CONTEST.

Another interesting project that I’ve worked on recently. The “Avatar” contest took place just before the release of the well – known movie. We were offered to create our vision of the mysterious planet Pandora. I did a quick sketch (Fig.09) with which I was quietly satisfied but I wanted to go a bit further. I took several of my



Fig.11

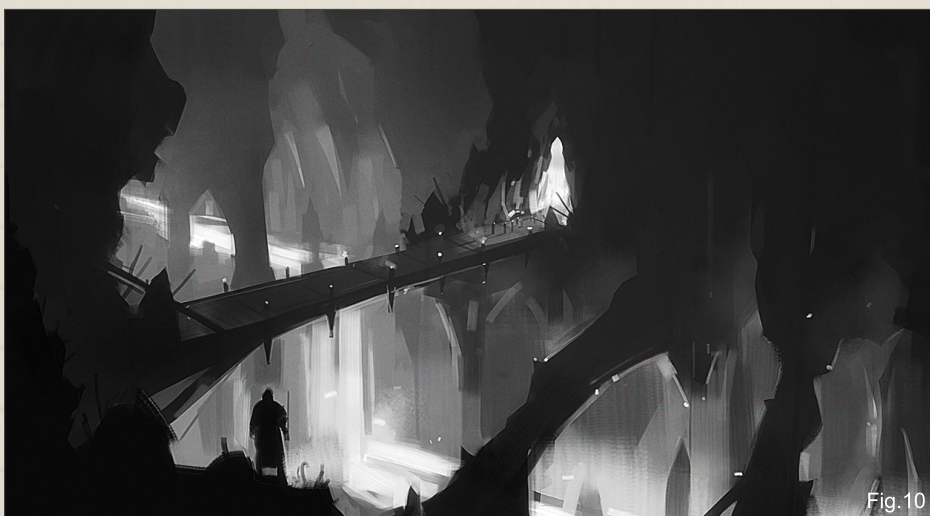


Fig.10

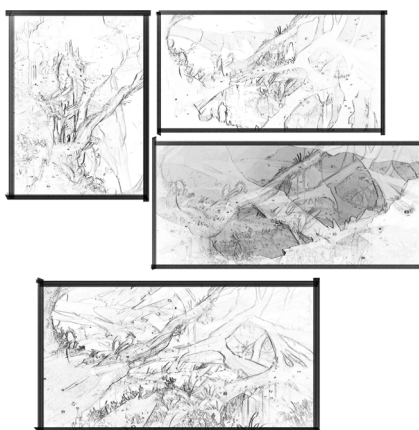


Fig.12

previous sketches, (Fig.10 and Fig.11), and started to mix them with my original sketch using layer modes in Photoshop. After I had enough of a mess I duplicated the layer and set the mode to difference. I then moved the top layer a few pixels away from original position, desaturate everything and then I inverted the picture.

Wuala, now I’ve got fresh sketches that look like a pencil drawn sketches. (Fig.12)

I found this method quite creative and it helped me to come up with some interesting results. Using the last one I've created this sketch (Fig.13) that I used for final concept. Having a chance I want to show my huge respect to James Cameron and the all people who worked on that wonderful movie. "Avatar" was a great inspiration for many people.



Fig.13

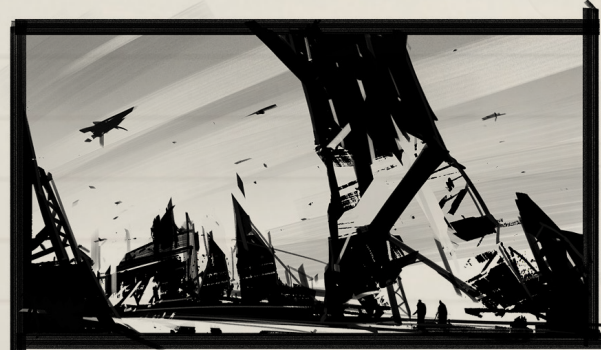
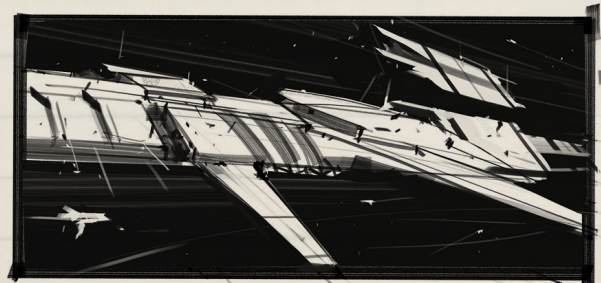
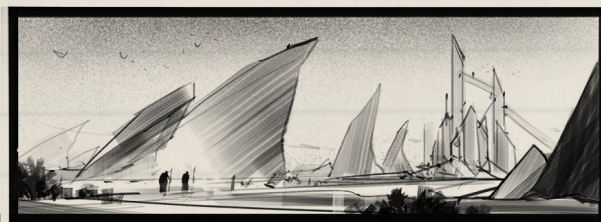
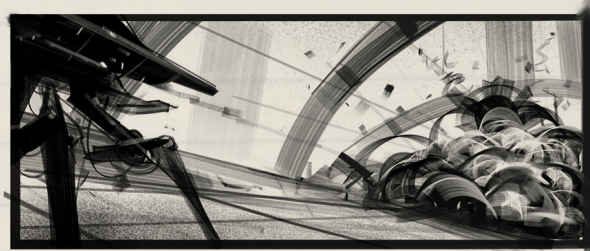


Fig.15

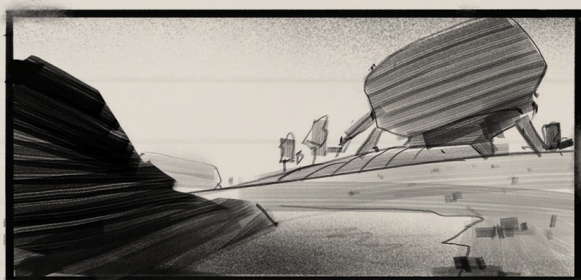


Fig.14

DIGITAL PEN STUDIES

As I stated at the beginning of my article, I am in continuous search of new techniques that can help me to develop my own style and to boost my creativity. Here is a set of sketches (Fig.14, Fig.15 and Fig.16) that I've created in Photoshop. Combining different brush presets it is really fun to create images that almost look like they've been created by ordinary pencils.

CONCLUSION

Being a self-taught artist, every day I face a lot of problems related with my lack of technical knowledge about art. But I am sure that learning the technical aspect of drawing is an endless process for each artist, besides every artist should develop his/her creativity.

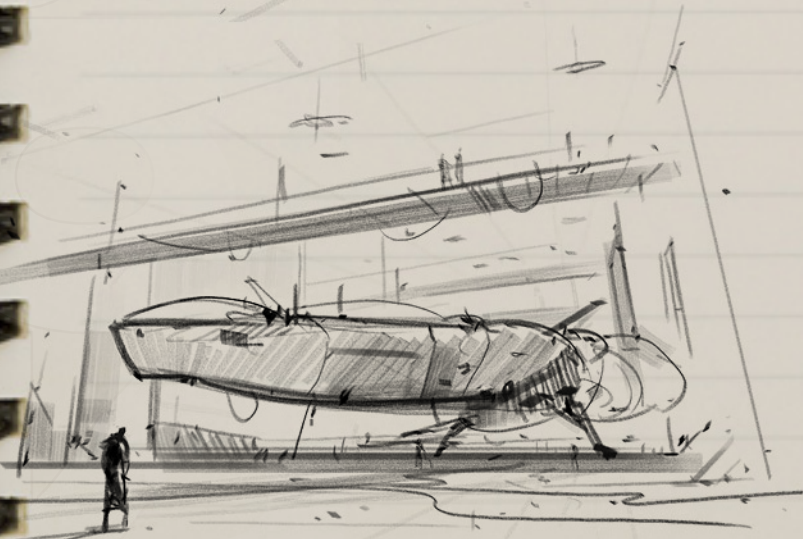
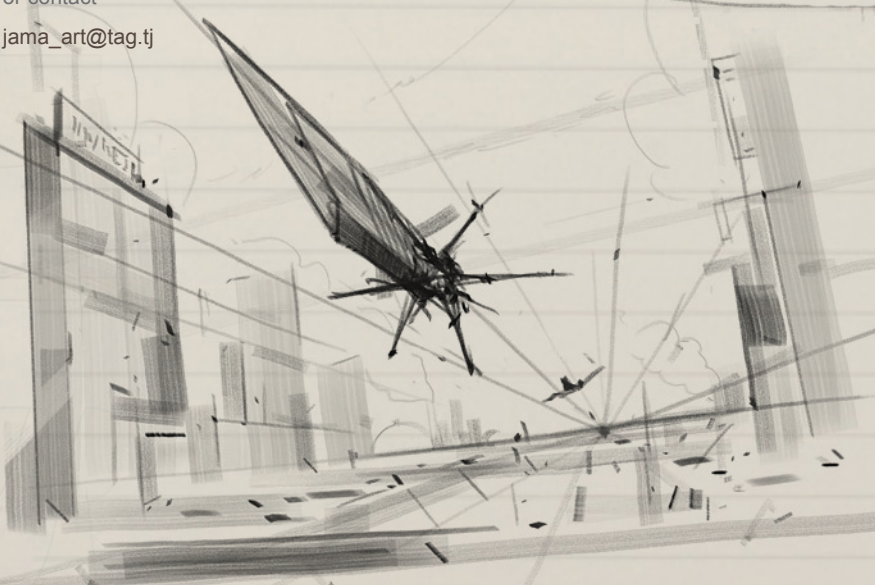
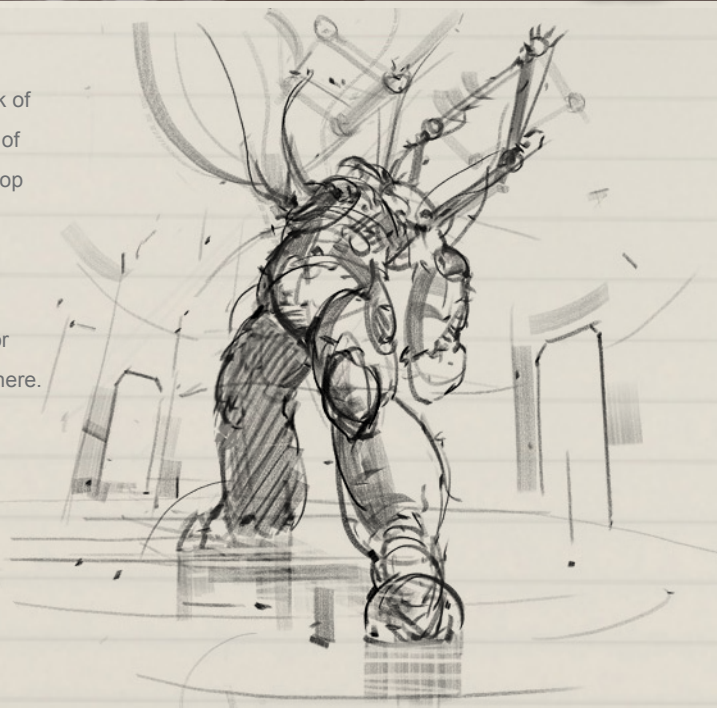
I have a dream of working in the game or movie industry one day. This dream drives me to develop myself as much as I can. And I try to use different tools for that. There is still a lot of things to explore out there, that is why I have to stop here.

Hope this article was somehow helpful and interesting!

See you in the close future, thank you.

JAMA JURABAEV

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<http://jamajurabaev.deviantart.com>
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Cretaceous Sunset

Kerem Beyit

<http://www.theartofkerembeyit.com/>

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(Above)

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Good Vs Evil

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General

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(Right)



Rabbit Concept

Tsvetomir Georgiev

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(Left)

Tas

Ertac Altınöz

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Concrete 5

Yang Xueguo

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Yang Xueguo
2010.4



Fly1

Nicolas Ferrand

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(Above)

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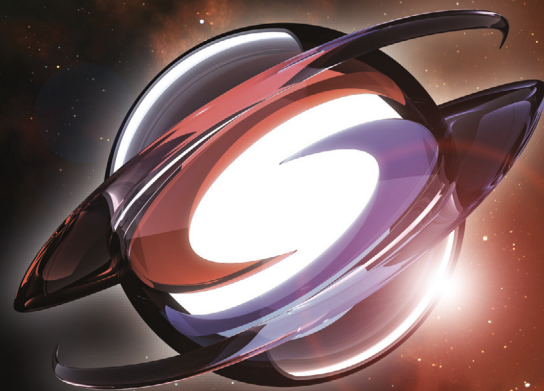
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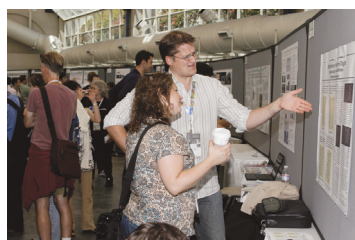
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PAINTING FANTASY MEDIEVAL SCENES



This series of tutorials will be split over six separate chapters, all sharing the common theme of a fantasy inspired medieval scene at its heart. Each will be undertaken by a different artist and draw upon a wealth of experience and skills perfected over years of industry practice. The authors will discuss their approach to digital /concept painting, the tools and brushes they employ and treat us to a valuable look into their artistic process. The six installments will cover a different environment each month based upon the above theme and encompass a multitude of professional tips and techniques.

The importance of researching topics through to sketching and exploring ideas will feature alongside methods used to build and refine detail. These will form an integral part of the series and through comparison we shall be afforded a comprehensive insight into the world of the digital artist.

- Chapter 1** | Market - Jan 2010
- Chapter 2** | City on Stilts - Feb 2010
- Chapter 3** | Slums - Mar 2010
- Chapter 4** | Excalibur - Apr 2010
- Chapter 5** | Mountain City - This Month May 2010
- Chapter 6** | Docks - Next Month Jun 2010

Painting Fantasy Medieval Scenes Chapter 5: Mountain City

Software Used: Photoshop

Here's my Step-by-Step Tutorial about painting a Medieval Mountain City with a Castle.

For this one I started with a very rough line drawing (Fig.01) to layout the scene without caring about colors and values. I knew that I wanted to show a Castle from a distant point of view, almost like how a visitor would see it for the first time. At this point perspective of the various elements is wrong in some places, because I played around with composition by moving parts of the image around. The very idea was in landscape, but I decided to change the orientation later. We will have time to fix minor perspective issues later, for now though general layout, visual flow and scale of elements is more important.

When I was happy with my composition I started to separate the drawing into layers and gave them full flat colors with 100% opacity (Fig.02). Every color is a separate layer. Now it is also time to add a perspective grid. It will be important later when we clean up and detail the scene, especially the buildings. The

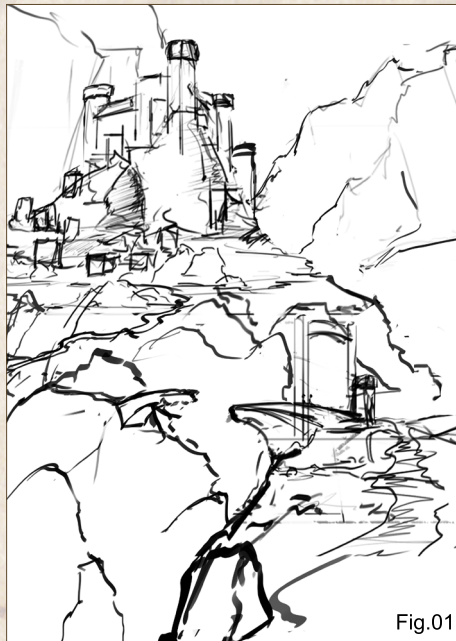


Fig.01

horizontal line is almost in the middle, which normally should be avoided for a more dynamic approach, but this time I wanted to be able to look up and down at the same time.

Now the fun part starts! at least for me it's the most interesting part. After staring at the linework for a few minutes I have a rough idea of how I want the colors to look, so I block them in roughly (Fig.03). I separated the different depth layers and decided to have a mix of rock and snow materials without any vegetation. To add some color perspective too I added more red and brownish colors to the foreground

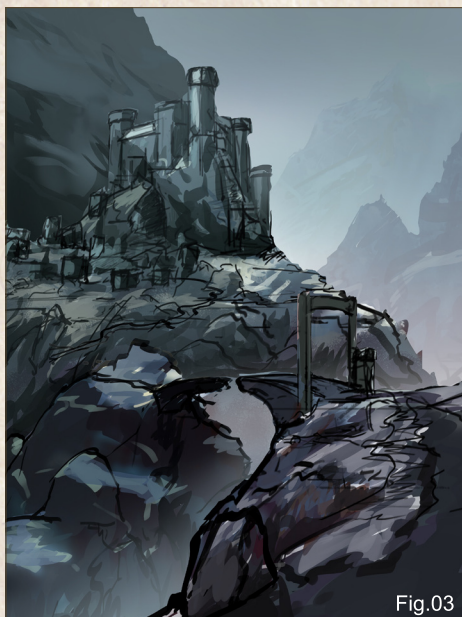


Fig.03

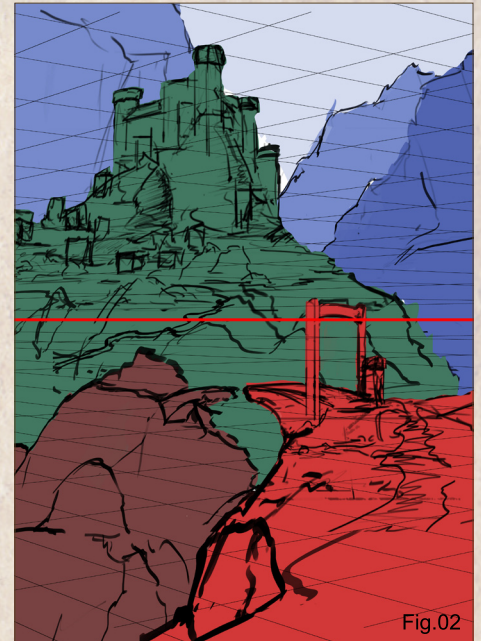


Fig.02

objects. Don't try to get the perfect colors at that stage, try to keep the whole color balance of your image in mind.

In (Fig.04) I made a little change to what I had imagined to begin with. Why not create a scene with some sunlight which illuminates only some parts of the castle and the surrounding rocks, with some small houses in the dark? this could look more interesting because this way there is a first and a second reading for the image. At this stage I am only using photoshop standard brushes.

Most people when they start to paint digitally believe that they need fancy cool brushes to make an image look great. I think special brushes are not important for an interesting image! Colors and Values are way more important than fancy brushes! So please, learn to paint with standard round and soft brushes, and make sure your colors and values look good. Then you can try to spice up your painting with fancy brushes.

It's time to check the perspective. I do that by switching back to my perspective grid layer and by flipping the image horizontally. This gives you a fresh look at the image, and will help you identify problems, and surprise! I like the flipped

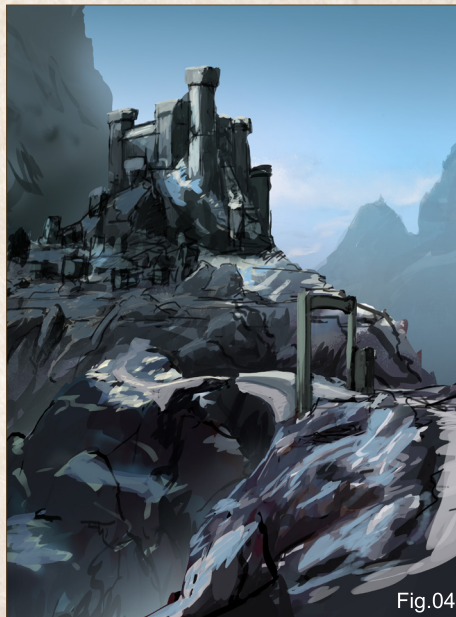


Fig.04

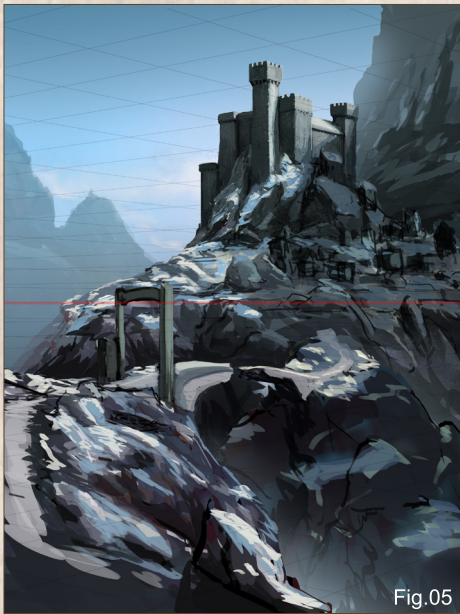


Fig.05

image much more. In the western world we read images from left to right, so now the reading direction of the image has also changed. The viewer starts from the distant point and follows the bridge to the castle and the city below it. (Fig.05) Somehow this adds a slight touch of a story to the painting. I like that, so I keep the image flipped.

In (Fig.06) colors are pretty fixed (though I will change some things later). So from now on it's just detailing, whilst staying in the boundaries of the rough color layout. I don't care about the buildings of the city at the moment because I have to sort so many things out first.



Fig.06

I don't like how uninteresting the foreground looks. It's unbalanced so I add some strong whites and hard contrasts to the foreground to make it visually more entertaining.

It's also time to admit that the fog between the rock layers is a bit disturbing, so I remove those layers to improve the harmony of the overall composition. A subtle fog layer done with a simple round soft brush puts the castle slightly further into the background. (Fig.07)

I feel that I would like to have more weight on the left side of the image, away from the city. I will add this later, but I start by adding some

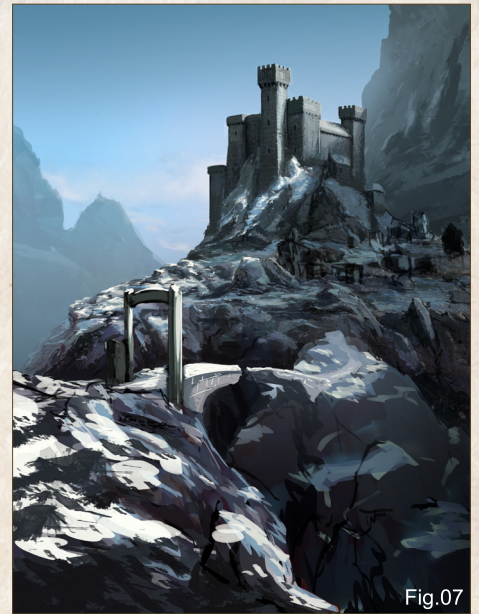


Fig.07

bright clouds to form an area of interest (Fig.08). I also lower the contrast between the city and the mountain behind it with a layer of grey color. The whole area on the right feels much more integrated now and the city will be in the dark shadows of the mountain. This gives room to play with some lights in the windows of the houses later.

It's time to add details to the foreground (Fig.09). I keep adding details with a very small hard edged elliptical brush, whilst trying not to change the overall color and value of the composition. A very good thing to do is always have the navigator window open to see a small representation of the actual image. If it looks good as a thumbnail and bad in the big view, then it's just a matter of detailing to make it look better. Be aware of images which read badly in the small navigator window. It will be very hard to make them look good just by adding details! If it looks bad as a thumbnail, find out why before you continue with detailing.

Later I will block in the shapes of the houses roughly. I am trying to work cleanly enough to have well defined shapes which are important for readability in this low contrast area.

Finally it's time to detail the houses (Fig.10). I'm trying to indicate details by adding windows,

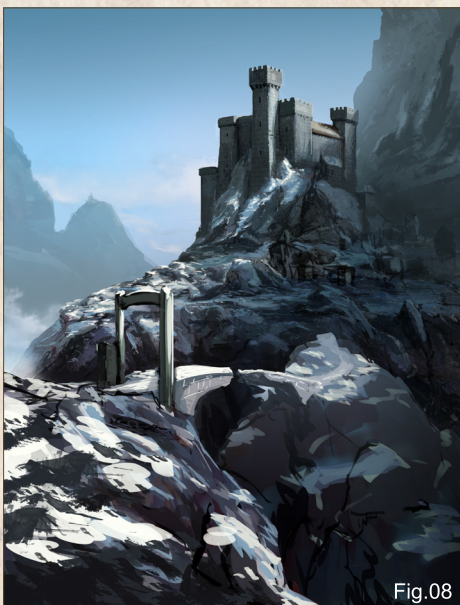


Fig.08

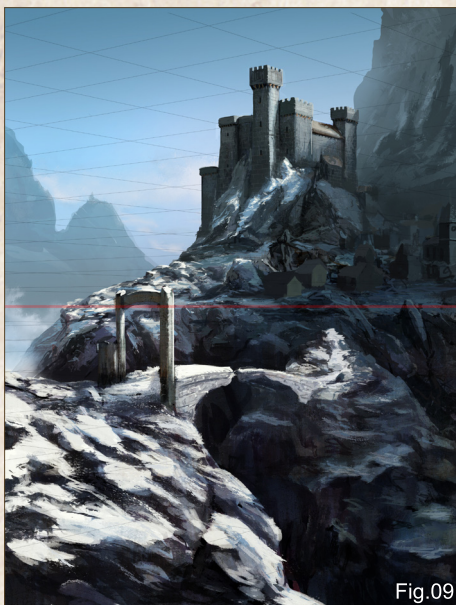


Fig.09

color changes, and shadows to push the buildings into the background. Small lights in some of the windows add weight to the city and draws attention back from the bright and high contrast foreground. At this stage I am happy with it and call the painting finished.

I hope you enjoyed my little tutorial.

Alex Broeckel

For more from this artist visit:


<http://www.alexbroeckel.com>

or contact them at:

alexbroeckel@gmail.com



Fig.10

A detailed digital painting of a dragon's head and upper body. The dragon is dark grey or black with intricate scales and flowing, wavy hair. It has a fierce expression with glowing yellow eyes and its mouth is wide open, breathing a massive plume of bright orange and yellow fire. The background is a dark, smoky orange, suggesting a volcanic or infernal environment. The lighting is dramatic, highlighting the dragon's features and the intensity of the fire.

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“Having traversed towards the edge of the chasm, we espy the hybrid DeepCable express hidden within. Utilizing this mass transport we take the 5 mile deep journey into the heart of the engineering marvel of the Steamworld”

painting steampunk environments the 5 ages of steampunk

Five Ages of Steamworld encompasses the five interconnected districts of

Chapter 1: D'Automobilis

Neo-Victorian Era - epitomised by Victorian transport - railways, architecture, culture, way of life

Chapter 2: D'Vinci

The medieval/ high renaissance period of Steampunk

Chapter 3: D'Metronomus

Epitomised by Clockwork Steampunk as the main visual theme

Chapter 4: Diesel

Epitomised by late Industrial Revolution where diesel powers everything

Chapter 5: D'Inginis

Final leg of tour looks at both the heart of realm of D'Machinis & Inginis - meaning Machines & engines respectively.

Painting Steampunk Environments: Chapter 4 - Diesel

Software Used: Photoshop

Realm of the Diesel Punk Engineers

Welcome to this series of workshops encompassing the Five Ages of SteamPunk within the alternate Realm of "Steam PanGloria Globus the 3rd" (SteamWorld for short).

Our tour is now midway through the InterRealms and encompasses different eras and themes within the five interconnected districts of **SteamWorld** (D'Automobilis, D'Vinci, D'Metronomus, Diesel & D'Inginis) and administered by the central transit & engineering hub of the Guild of D'Machinis.

Previously, the first leg of the tour started within the **Victorian Era of D'Automobilis** - whereby, we had the opportunity to briefly discover how transport became the mainstream thrust of the Brittanic Victorians, starting with the steam engine. Our tour also looked into designing and developing steampunk transport and environments using a themed period as a starting basis.

Subsequently the second aspect of the tour involved travels within the Medieval Era of

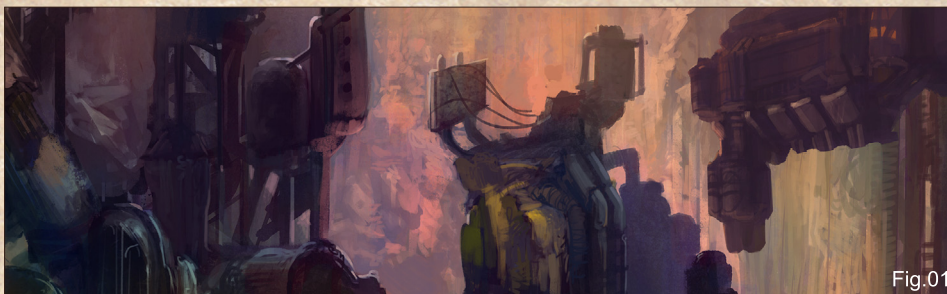


Fig.01

D'Vinci of high renaissance architecture, places of worship and towering edifices of rock amidst a skeletal frame.

Within the clockwork fantasy of the third realm D'Metronomus, our intrepid explorers undertook a historic tour within the oldest heart of the inter-realms whilst an appreciation of moss covered texturing of various elements was shared.

D'Inginis Diesalis

From the ancient heartland of D'Metronomus, we continue on our journey into the inner workings of the Fourth Realm.

It is here, that the tireless powerhouse of Diesalis powers the various furnaces and aetheric energies of the Steamworld. Key to this distinctive Realm, is the usage of industrial pipes, weldings, bolts and engine components. There is a minimalism when it comes towards aesthetic considerations, with the beauty inherent relative towards the prominent display the D'Inginis.

And thus at the magic twilight hour, we finally reach the border of The Drop.

The Drop

The drop represents a sharp demarcation between the cloud and mist of the ancient overgrown heartland of D'metronomus, and the pipe laden, humid underworld of D'Inginis Diesalis. It is from here we have to continue further afoot towards a lower vantage point of this chasm whereby we come across the derelict scrapyard of the Drop. (Fig.01)

It is here we can choose a suitable location to set up an evening composition from which to depict the merging of two styles. That of a diesel steampunk laden style and that of a overgrown naturalistic nature.

The first thing to note is that with such a twilight scene, one needs to work fast. For there will barely be half an hour to an hour before the light fades fast. It is also during this time that lighting can be at its strongest - providing strong contrasts and saturated lighting. (Fig.02)

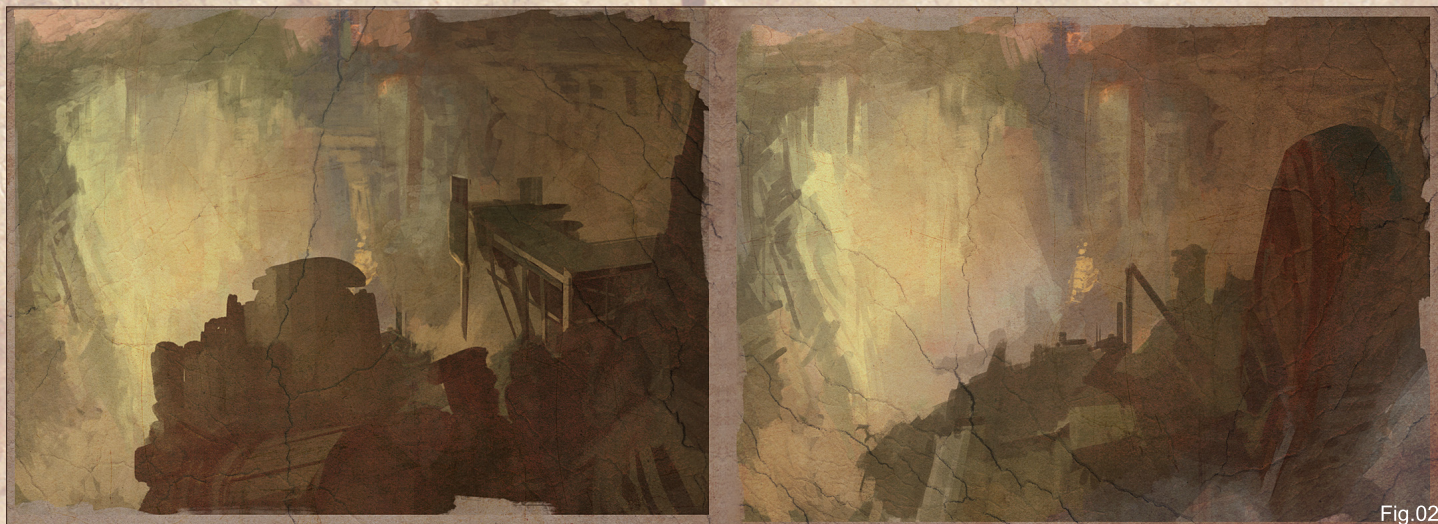


Fig.02

The initial canvas should be rapidly prepared with a rapid block out of the strong key forms and objects, thus providing a strong read (and contrasts). Two similar compositions are explored initially to depict a naturalistic harmony between a strongly lit scene, and one that depicts its steampunk nature.

The Composition

Following the initial sketch, one can combine the best of the two sketches to form the “bones” of the composition. (Fig.03)

One thing to note is a level of readability, whereby background is clearly demarcated from the foreground objects. In addition, the main lighting direction should be determined in order to plot the core shadows and local ambient occlusion.

Roughly translated into plain speak, this means a depiction of hard and soft forms, angular and



Fig.03



Fig.04

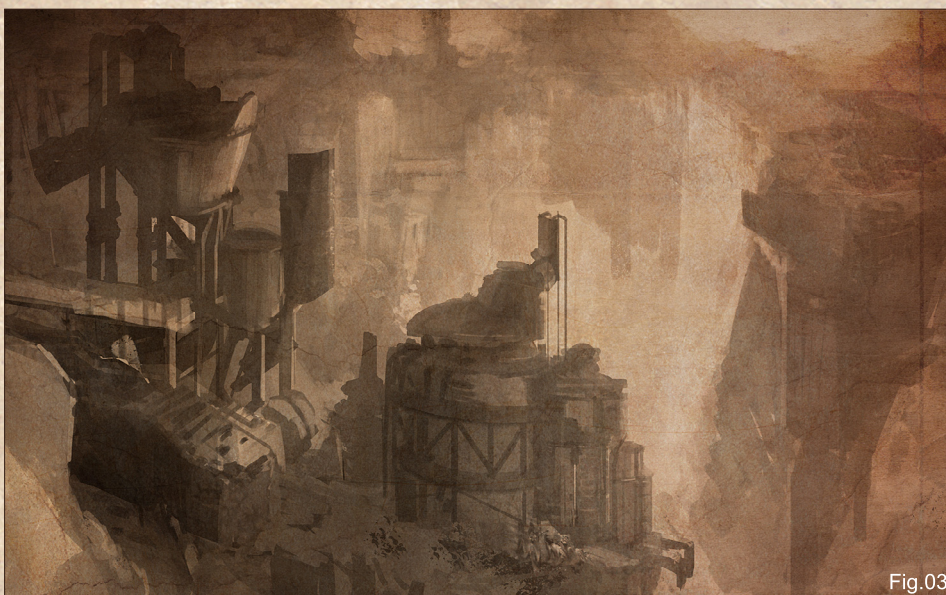


Fig.05

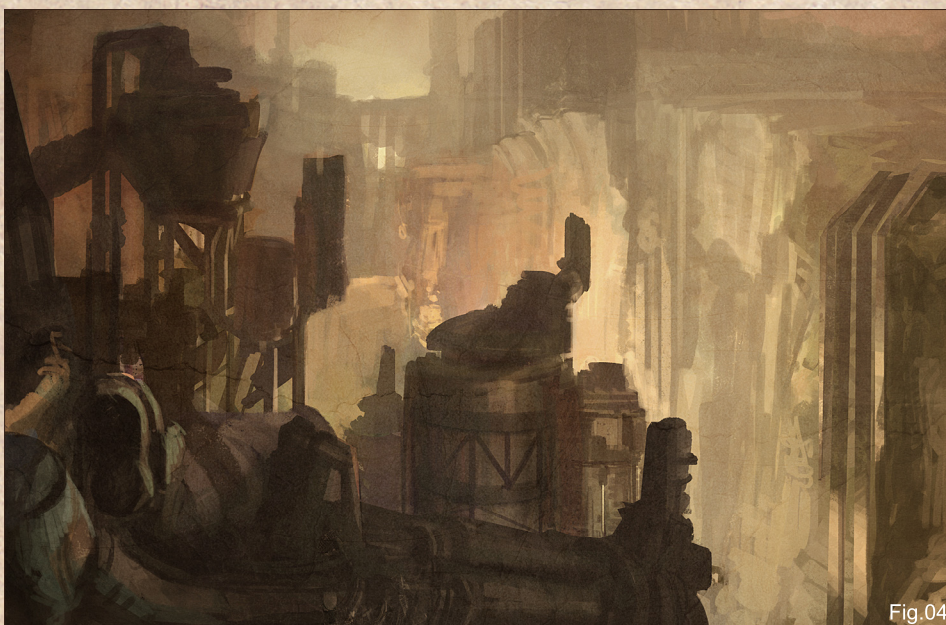


Fig.06

curved shapes and lastly low contrast values (objects in the distance) and higher contrast silhouettes (foreground). This methodology requires the usage of the canvas to provide a monochromatic tone from which to build positive and negative shapes.

Shape, Form and Texture

Subsequently, we can start bulking up the sketch with some early introduction of warm tones throughout. This both provides an opportunity to unify various foreground objects with the same core shadows, and provide a textural warmth of a lower contrast and unified background shapes. (Fig.04)

The next stage affords one to work rapidly by bulking the main meat of the image with further focal details, whilst still keeping a loose energetic hand. Strokes and brushwork can afford to be confident and assured, reflecting a conscious choice of simplifying certain details into a few strokes - denoting both textural quality, specularity and tonal form. (Fig.05 – 06)

Reference - Art Direction

To aid with the depiction of such objects, it can be useful to observe various construction scenes such as the reference provided within. Note, the level of regularity, large bold shapes of pipes within the photo (denoted with a yellow



Ref.01



Ref.02

circle) - these linear shapes help anchor the main super structure towards the ground plane and thus reflect the need for solid, believable foundations. (Ref.01)

In terms of style, it is particularly useful to observe first hand an industrial complex (if possible). Here, we depict the "inside out building" of the Lloyds' building at One Lime Street, London as a suitable primer to depict the strong diesel punk theme of this workshop. Note, the use of parallel shapes, piping and reflectivity of its surface material relative towards the ambient (blue sky) surrounding. The ability to depict such similar shapes in various lighting conditions will greatly aid in the depiction of a dramatic steampunk artworks. (Ref.02)

Lastly, a warm pinkish atmosphere is added to the overall scene to capture the lasting rays of twilight and thus soften various midground shapes, and unify the background overall. (Fig.07)



Fig.07

Up-lighting

Uplighting can often be used to increase the dramatic effect of a low light scene. This effect is often prominently use within theatrical or museum displays, upon listed historical buildings and deco styled monuments & buildings. (Fig.08)

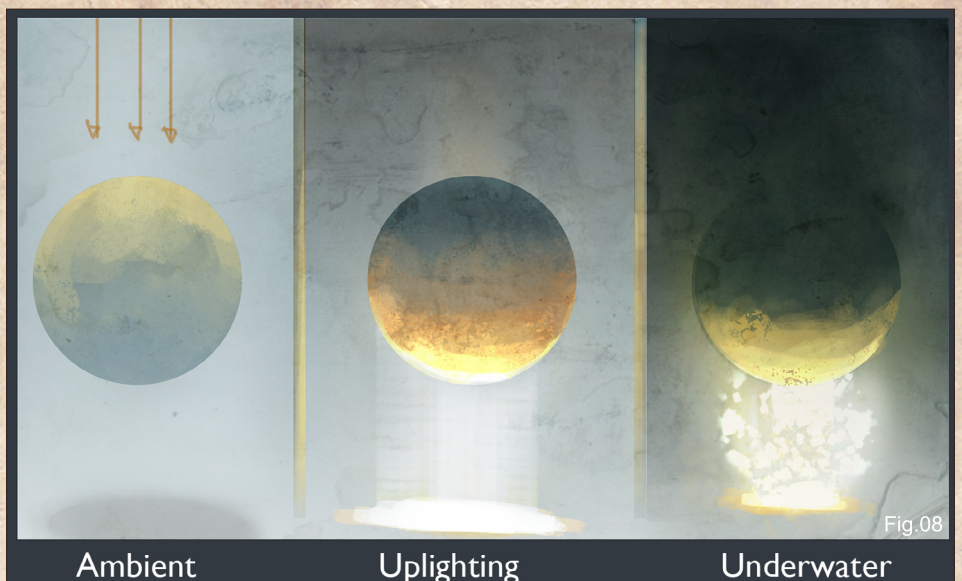


Fig.08

Ambient

Uplighting

Underwater

However to denote nighttime scenes, one needs to be particularly observant of local lighting.

Notice how strongly various forms have a strong edge, with saturated bold tones and forms. In addition, objects in the distance tend to fade

rapidly into black which is quite a contrast to phased fall off gradient in daytime. (Ref.03)



Ref.03

The Engine Room

1 Preliminary BlockIn

Having traversed towards the edge of the chasm, we espy the hybrid DeepCable express hidden within. Utilizing this mass transport we take the 5 mile deep journey into the heart of the engineering marvel of the Steamworld. Powered by a massive set of diesel powered levers, pistons and flywheels - it is here that sufficient heat and power can be generated to distil the aetheric powersource that provides free lighting, heat and energy for portable and general usage throughout the SteamWorld. (Fig.09)



Fig.09



Fig.10

To capture the look and feel of the massive engines herein, let us start by preparing a fresh canvas and block in all the main primary shapes using large broad strokes via a simple chalk brush. (Fig.10)

The next step is to provide immediate focal detail. In this instance, we depict a massive angled elevator used to ferry large tunnel boring machines and supplies into the heart of this realm. Subsequently, we help unify the overall image with elements of lost edges and grain to provide a better overall read of the composition. (Fig.11)

2 Detailer

This next step is a more formalized aspect of blocking in forms and designing elements



Fig. 11

so they fit both perspective, proportions and communicate effectively as a solid set of objects to the viewer (Fig. 12). In addition, surface materials are provided with the appropriate treatment - eg. such as providing reflective mirror-like surface materials for smooth metallic surfaces. (Fig. 13)

3 ColourGrade - Detailing

Once the formalized aspect of firming up the details are complete, the next aspect is to provide a color grade for all the objects and scene.

Firstly, the composition is skewed slightly towards a hazy tan yellow feel to provide a colored monochromatic base. This is followed up further with the addition of localised reddish

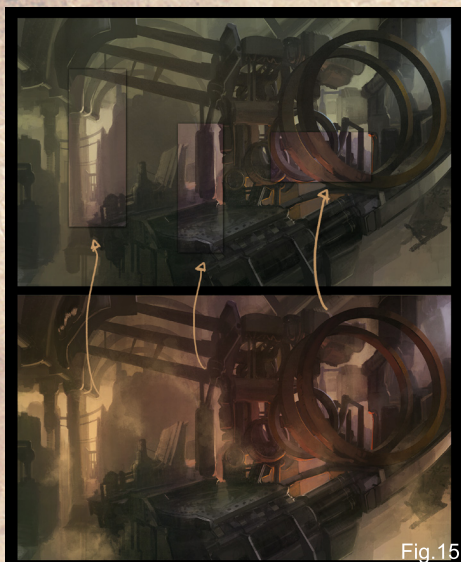


Fig. 15



Fig. 12



Fig. 13



Fig. 14

hues and complimentary dark greens (to denote different surface materials). (Fig. 14 – 15)

Lastly, localised uplighting and reflected surfaces are rendered accordingly with small minor tweaks to represent the hot humid atmosphere of being enclosed within a furnace-like ambience. (Fig. 16)

The Flood

Lastly, we will depict how to convert an existing image towards a more flooded feel, by literally flooding it. Firstly, let us briefly discuss our mode

of railed transport that would allow for such an undertaking.

In essence, a dual mode hybrid that is a cross between a tram and a submersible would be required. As such, it is simply a straightforward case of designing a plain bulkhead in the initial instance, without any additional distinguishing forms. Central to this, is what I'd liken to a horizontal waistline that denotes a separation between the lower ballast/cargo of such a transport, and the upper division that would safely encompass our artist explorers.

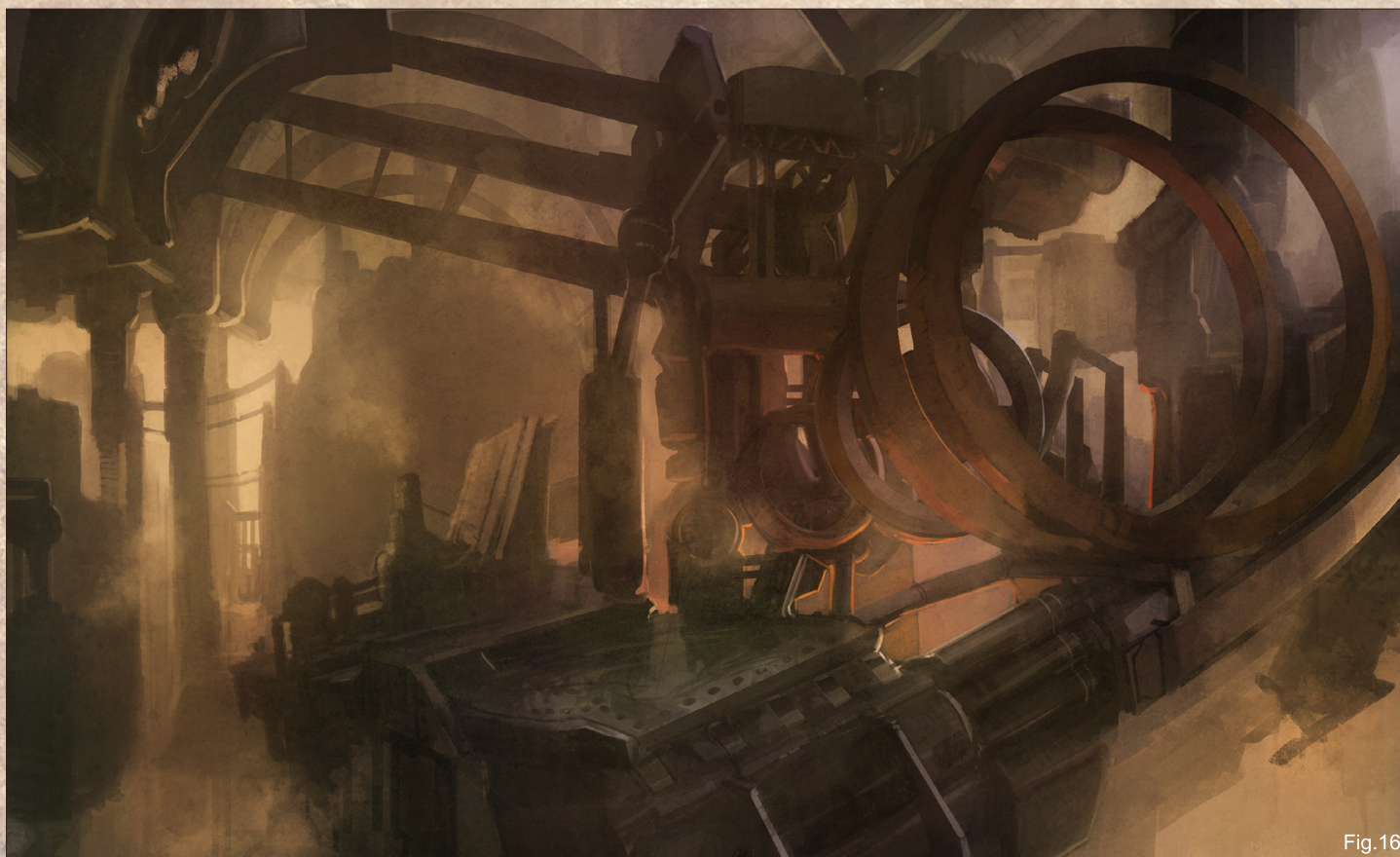


Fig.16

The next step, is to incorporate elements of a mass transport of the DeepCable express.

Elements that were incorporated include a rear propulsion system, a local ambulatory set of paddles (resembling flippers) and a top mounted overhanging grapple pulley system. Between the trio, this hybrid system would comfortably traverse the depths and above water realms with comparative ease.

Lastly, in terms of color reference we undertook the next best thing to being underwater by gathering reference from similar colour grading expected underwater. The only exception to this is to realise that falloff underwater is fairly rapid. (Fig.17)

Reference - Lighting & Colour Underwater

The colors of yellow and red have the shortest falloff, followed subsequently by cyan and blue. Thus, everything underwater will tend to have a cyan/bluish color reflected back towards the

viewers eye. In addition, over a certain distance, everything else fades into a greyish black - and thus objects lose their details fairly rapidly.

Not a terribly exciting prospect for artists surely.

To ameliorate this, we bring in local lighting and spotlights (of epic luminosity). Utilizing

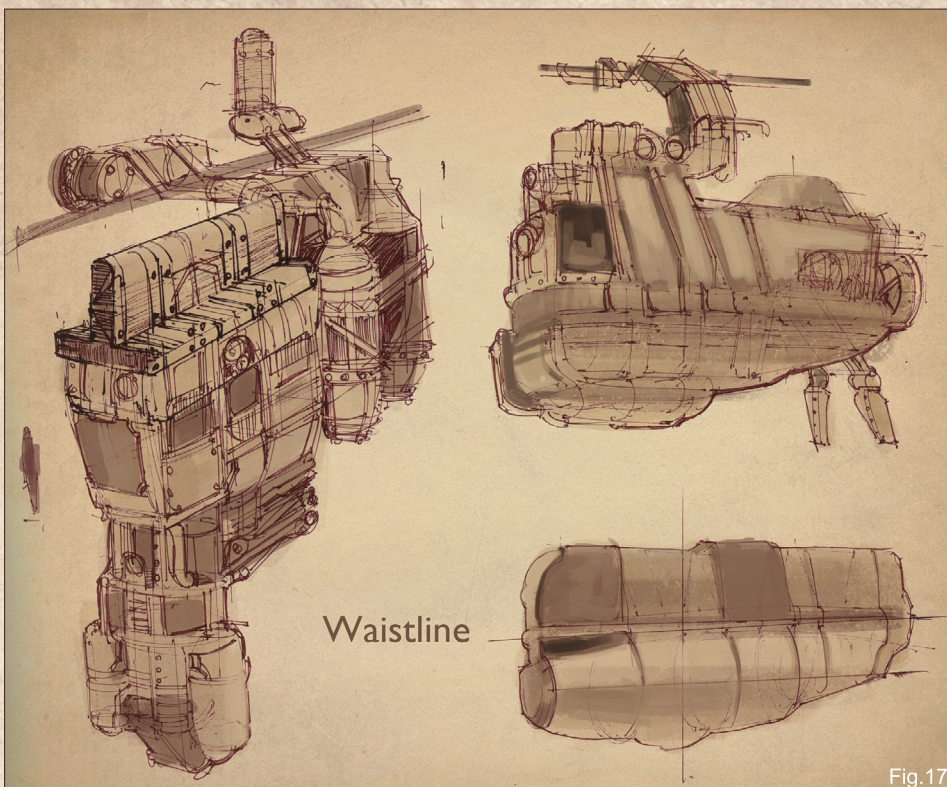


Fig.17

the aspects of uplighting and local lighting, the artist can bring about a creative and dramatic depiction of structures underwater - and thus fire the imagination of the viewing audience.

(Ref.04)

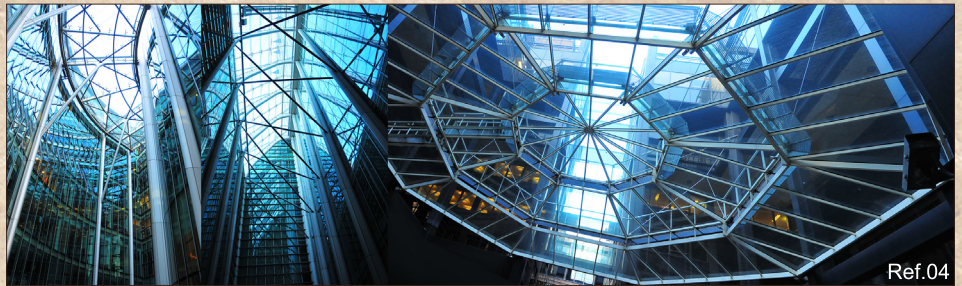
Underwater Conversion

Taking the above elements in mind, let us undertake the conversion of the existing scene into an underwater one.

First thing to note, is to eliminate a majority of the yellows and reds, and subsequently unify the image with a slightly saturated cyan feel. In doing so, this helps to group various complex shapes into core shapes and objects. This also eliminates various details due to a sharper falloff, (let us say arbitrarily) from the midground onwards.

Subsequently, to provide a more underwater feel - we are required to unify the image further akin to peering through a green fog. This further eliminates a lot of focal detail, and we will have to bring certain features back to fore, via the judicious usage of local lighting. (Fig.18)

By utilizing uplighting, this can help create a more dramatic scene. Sometimes, one can also



Ref.04

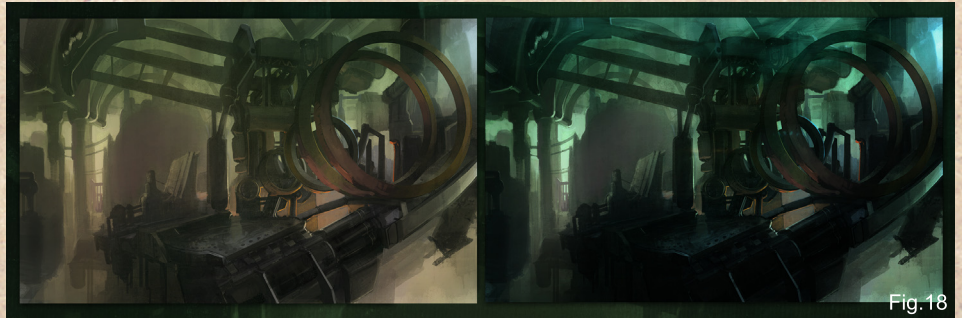


Fig.18

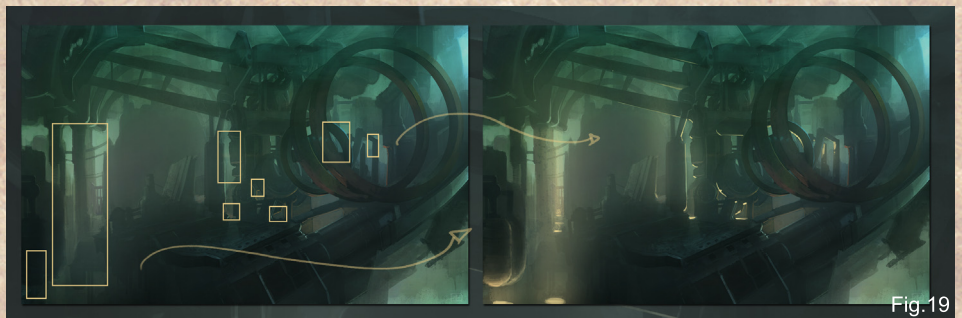


Fig.19

try to paint such a scene upside down. This may help the artist plot various light rays and falloffs with relative ease - however once you are attuned towards painting above water, and

utilizing uplighting for night scenes, the brain can develop a dual switch (to a certain extent).

(Fig.19)

Lastly, to complete the underwater conversion - one can depict the scene utilizing the underwater submersibles and transports depicted in Fig.20. A mixture of sharper edges, contrasts between local lights and larger spotlights may either mesh together or provide a conflicting read.

Thus, ensure the placement of foreground objects and lighting can compliment one another for a more harmonious involved feeling.

End of D'Inginis Tour

Welcome back to our central hub of the Steamworld where our tour comes towards its penultimate end.

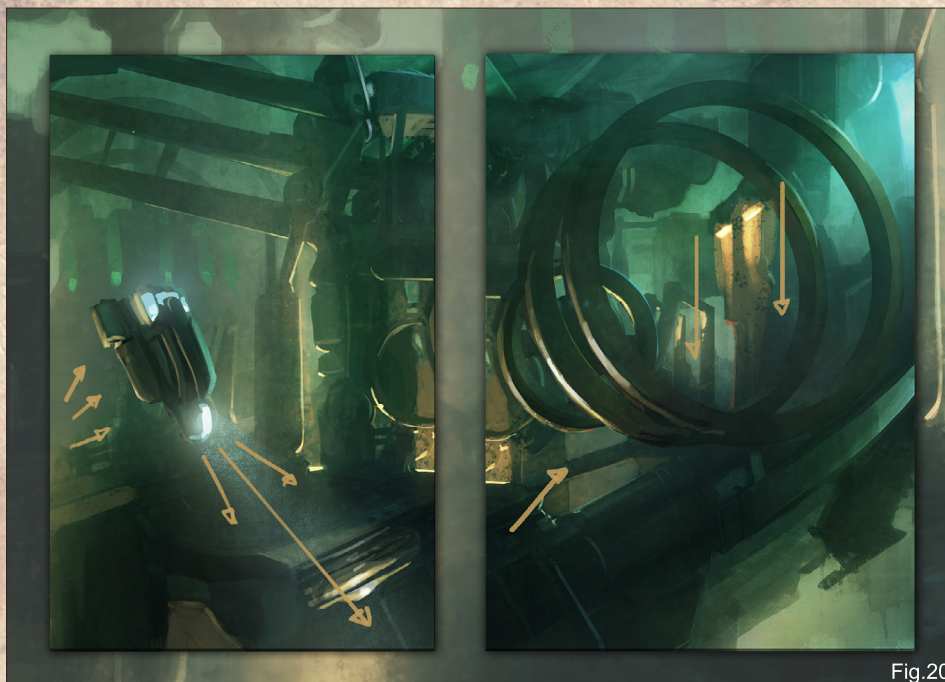



Fig.20



Within this tour, we took a more naturalistic approach towards depicting an everyday scene - by setting down tones and strokes rapidly using a mixture of softer broad strokes and firmer (detailer) strokes for areas of focal detail. The setting of a diesel powered realm run by engines and ducting afforded for the introduction of theatrical uplighting. In addition, we also delved into the underwater elements to see how this can work brilliantly to good effect.

For our final aspect of the five tours we will return towards the administrative centre of D'Machinis whereby we can afford to review all the machines, engines and objects that help provide an inherently unique look and feel that defines that which is steampunk. (Fig.21)

If you would like further information, advice or additional reading, please feel free to contact us at workshops@opusartz.com

Chee Ming Wong

For more from this artist visit:

<http://www.opusartz.com>

or contact them at:

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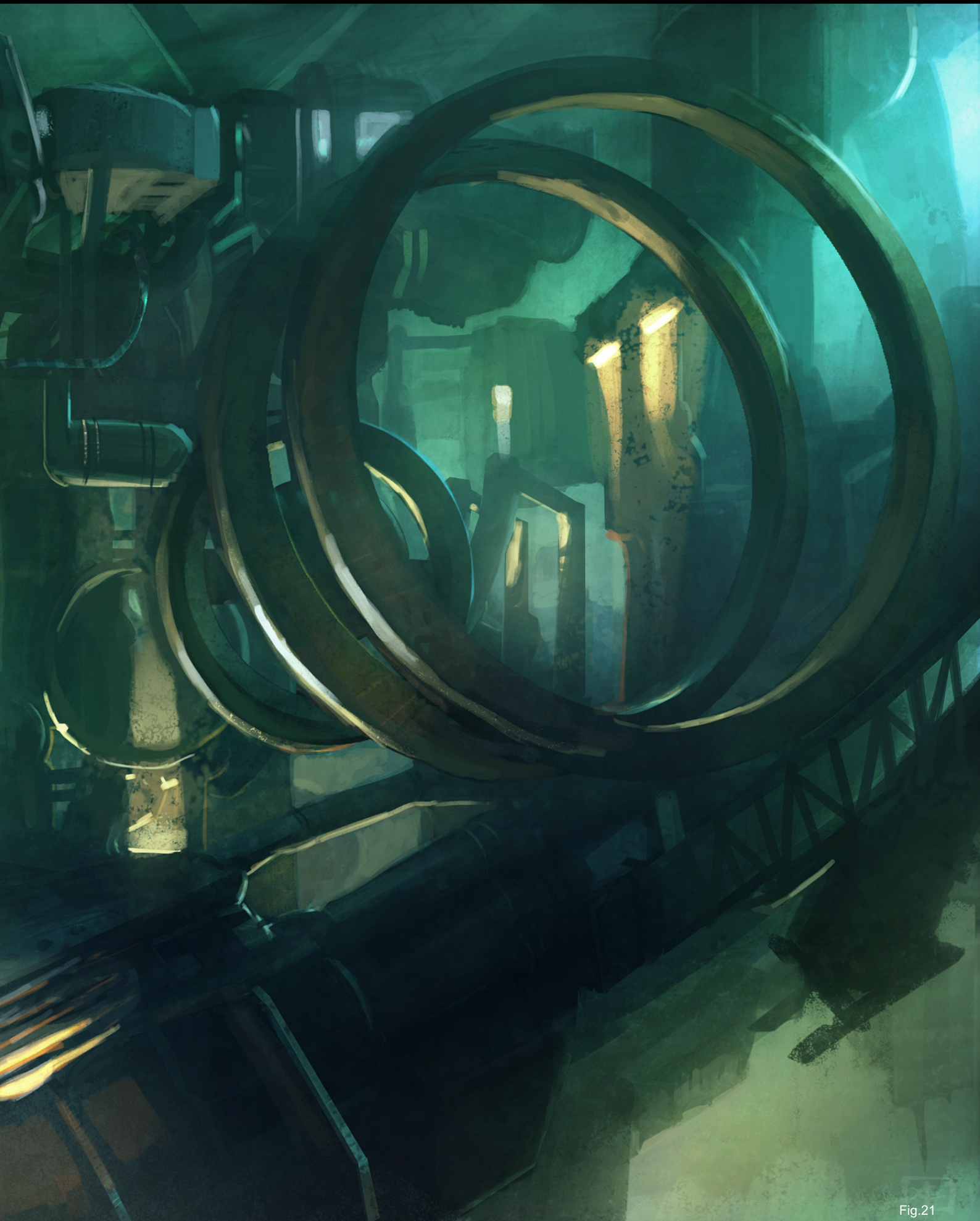


Fig.21



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Chapter 1 | Issue 052 Mar 2010 | Wealthy City

Chapter 2 | Issue 052 Apr 2010 | Docks

Chapter 3 | Issue 053 May 2010 | Skyscrapers and flying traffic

Chapter 4 | Issue 054 Jun 2010 | Slum City

Chapter 5 | Issue 055 Jul 2010 | Bazaar/ indoor market place

Chapter 6 | Issue 056 Aug 2010 | Aerial shot over a city at sunset

“One thing that I can say for sure is that color variation is the thing that makes things look realistic.”

Chapter 3 - Sky Scrapers and Flying Traffic

Software Used: Photoshop

Introduction

Hello, everybody. Thanks a lot for 2dartist magazine for allowing me to share some of my workflow with its readers.

In this tutorial I am going to show how to create a scene with some air traffic and skyscrapers. Of course, before I start to draw or paint something I try to think about the theme, and to form some basic ideas in my mind. People have seen enough of various cityscapes with flying aircraft and cars in films like Star Wars, Star Trek and other epic movies. I think recreating these scenes would be unfair and I wanted to create something a bit different, but I was still unsure what exactly I wanted to create. I think it is sometimes good to start with some uncertainty because it can give some unpredicted and pleasant results.

On the other hand, I wanted this tutorial to be concentrated more on procedure of creation rather than on the painting process and

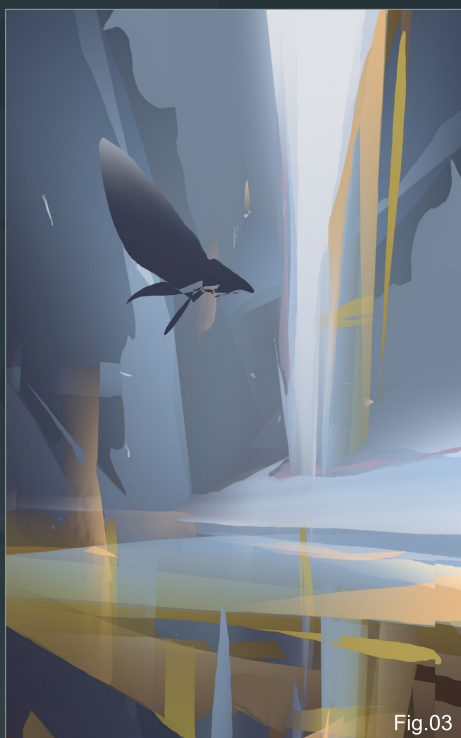


Fig.03



Fig.01

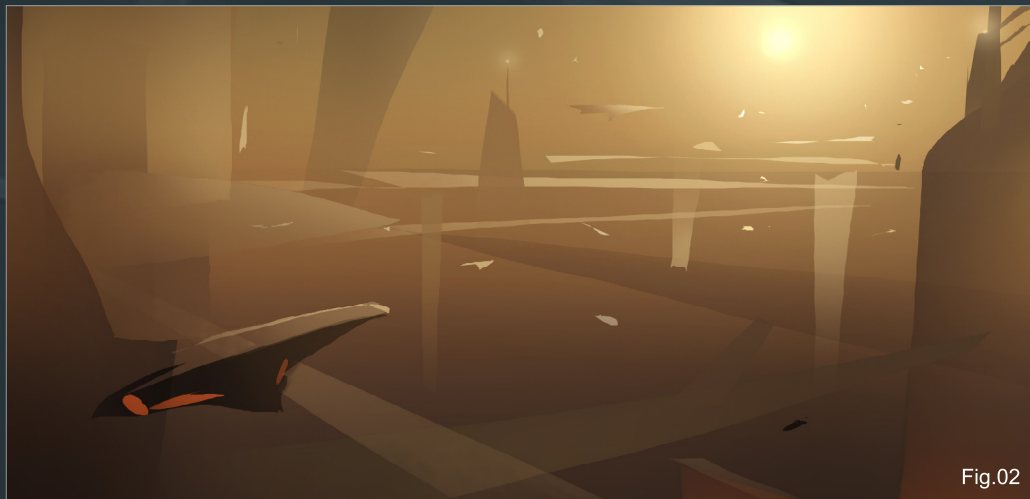


Fig.02

Photoshop tools, because I think learning Photoshop as a tool is a technical issue, but learning to create something creative and original depends on ability to imagine and drop that imagination on the canvas. And I also want to talk more about the procedures that can boost your imagination. Anyway, time to start.

Sketches

When it comes to sketching, I try to do it in different ways and to explore. I remember watching one of the tutorials made by the great artist Nick Pugh. He really opened my imagination. Nick showed different sketching techniques trying to show how to work with abstraction and unpredicted designs and so on. Sometimes he draws with his left hand to obtain different shapes and forms. After watching those tutorials, I tried to plug in this abstract thinking into my workflow and my sketches.

I use mainly Photoshop in my paintings, and everything done here was in Photoshop. For this one I started to paint using the Lasso Tool (L) and Gradient fill Tool (G). Both these tools are great to create basic shapes and form. The Lasso tool allows you to keep sharp edges while the Gradient Fill tool brings nice gradient color transitions and color variations.

At this stage I try not to think about perspective, colors, light and other things. I just relax and paint. I start by selecting some regions with the lasso and filling them with color gradients. Some regions become flying ships, some of them skyscrapers. Some may be land or sky. I just create abstract forms that will inspire me to think about the final composition.

After playing around a bit, I created these sketches. (Fig.01, Fig.02 and Fig.03)

Hmm, I liked them, but nothing that I wanted to finish. So I copied all the images into one file and started to adjust layer modes in Photoshop. Layering images in different ways can create really unpredicted results and **Fig.04** was one of them.

I started to see this gigantic shape that was hovering above the landscape and I thought that could be a great shot. After detailing it a bit I came up with this image. (**Fig.05**)

Everything was working fine for me at this stage, except that the image had a slightly different mood. To set the mood and feel that you would like, it is good to look through different references. It can be photos, paintings, drawings, or even the weather out of your window. I used one of my own studies that I did not so long ago. (**Fig.06**)

When I had decided on the mood I started to refine my image, and at this stage I've refined some compositional issues too. (**Fig.07**)

The key tip here is constantly flipping the canvas to refresh your view point. It helps a lot to correct the composition and perspective. It is really surprising that there are no shortcuts for flipping the canvas in Photoshop, so don't be lazy, set up shortcuts for this operation. It saves a lot of effort!

Another thing that I refined here is the foreground. I started to think that making a

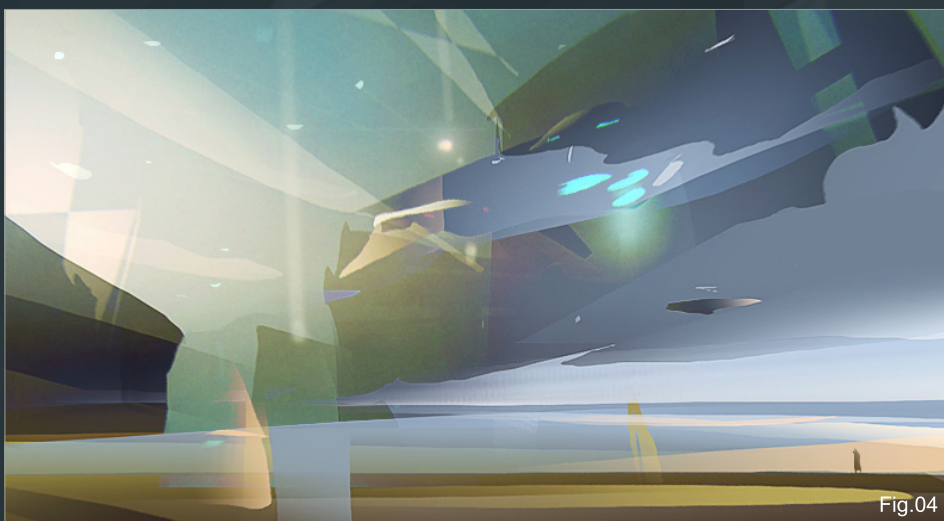


Fig.04



Fig.05

kind of desert landscape would create a good contrast with the futuristic buildings. I also thought that it would be interesting to show that humanity had eventually started to care about our beautiful mother Earth, and stopped destroying everything to build cities.

past such as Isaac Levitan, Aivazovsky and other masters of traditional paintings. By looking at their paintings you can observe and learn how to work and manage color. Not being a master of color myself, I am still learning and have a lot more to learn.

Colors

For me, the best way to learn about colors is to study the masterpieces of great artists of the

One thing that I can say for sure is that color variation is the thing that makes things look realistic. There are no plain colors in nature;



Fig.06



Fig.07

they all contain some kind of tint and hues. And in my paintings I try to insert those variations. If I paint grass, I introduce different colors than just green and this makes my grass look more realistic. I think the best way to learn about colors is to paint things from nature. Don't be lazy, go outside and paint, It will help a lot!

Detail

By refining a bit more, I come up with this. (Fig.08) I blocked the main skyscrapers and the rest was detailing the picture to head towards the final look. There are several ways that you can do this. You could paint all those details, or use photos and textures to imply the details. Both ways are good.

I used some of my previous paintings to create the details. (Fig.09 and Fig.10)

Why not? If Photoshop allows me to cut out some regions of my previous paintings and paste them into the new one, I will definitely go ahead and do it, especially when it comes to concept art, when everything has to be done in



Fig.08



Fig.09



Fig.10



Fig.11

the most efficient way. This is good way to bring the details quickly. (Fig.11)

After that it took me some time to refine everything in the image and add the air traffic to the sky. And here is the final image. (Fig.12)
Hope you like it.

Conclusion

As I said at the beginning of this tutorial, I wanted to share my process of creation.

Being a self-taught artist I have encountered many problems from the time I started. I looked through tons of articles and tutorials teaching Photoshop as a tool. After I had learned all of those useful tools and instruments, I realized that it is not enough at all! What is more important for me is to use those tools to bring my imagination to life. That is why I decided to share my methods that help me to imagine. Besides that I have a chance to share some technical tips with you. I hope 2dartist magazine

will kindly allow me to do this again in future! Thank you a lot.

Good luck,

Jama Jurabaev

For more from this artist visit:

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Fig.12



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PAINTING MONSTERS

“As I continued to think about my monster design I went back to traditional paper and pencil to develop my ideas.”

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This series of tutorials will be split over six separate chapters all of which will be dedicated to painting monsters suited to a range of habitats spanning jungle and aquatic to mountainous and subterranean. Each will be covered by a different author and will discuss their approach to digital /concept painting, the tools and brushes they employ and culminating in a final image. We shall gain an insight into the thought processes of each of our industry professionals and the ways in which they develop an idea from concept sketches through to a finished work. In particular we will be shown some of the considerations that are necessary to designing both imaginative and fantastic creatures that still remain plausible and abide by anatomical and evolutionary laws observed in nature.

Each tutorial will focus on a specific environment as its theme and therefore result in a varied collection of monster designs, providing a well rounded look into the world of the digital artist and the numerous tips and techniques used by proven individuals.

Chapter 5 - Sewer Dwelling/ Swamp

Software Used: Photoshop

Hello, my name is Andrew Pervukhin. I would like to start my tutorial by looking at all the brushes that I used to create my Swamp monster. I used brush 2 most of the time this is because I love her very much! (Fig.01)

Firstly I thought about the composition as a whole, what will the monster look like and what



Fig.02



Fig.03

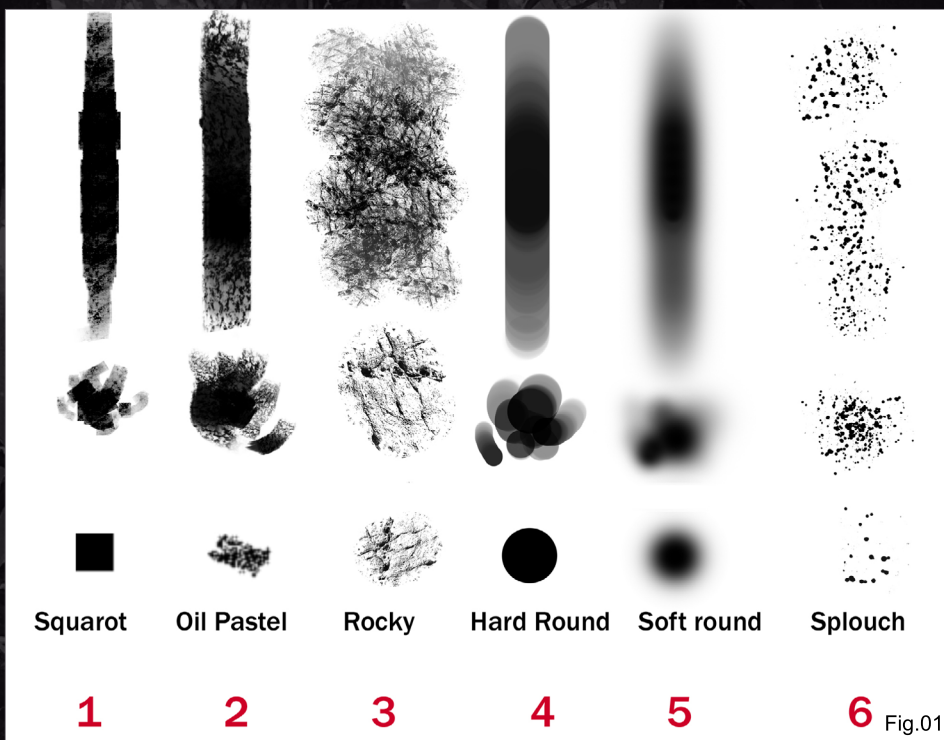


Fig.01

kind of environment will he be in? When I had an idea I started to create my piece by starting it in black and white. I do this because it's much easier to see how the final image will work.

Thinking again about the overall composition, where will the monster be, and from where will the light source be coming? I used brush one only to create this image. (Fig.02)

I continued to think about my overall composition, and tried a few different things to find out where I was going to put my detail. At

this stage I was mainly defining the silhouette of the monster and thinking more about its final design. For this image I used all the brushes apart from brush 3 and 6. (Fig.03)

The main point of this tutorial is to design a monster for the environment, so as I continued to think about my monster design I went back to traditional paper and pencil to develop my ideas. I did this in quite a lot of detail. This will help me as I continue my piece. I also find that the texture of pencil on paper helps too. (Fig.04)



Fig.04



Fig.05



Fig.06a



Fig.06b



Fig.06c

Next, I scanned in my pencil sketch and put it into my digital painting where the silhouette I had previously created was. I changed the settings from normal to multiply this layer, under it created a new layer with the normal settings and started to carefully fill it in without going beyond the pencil sketch. To help this I created a mask with clear boundaries around the monster and then I corrected the contrast using levels. (Fig.05)

The next stage was to select the colors. I made three versions in a variety of colors and I really liked the third option. I did it by creating several layers above the image and using the first layer for the casting color and the second layer for the soft light. (Fig.06a, Fig.06b and Fig.06c)

Now that I have determined the color and the composition for my monster and the environment he is in, I make a new layer to add some soft light and I use brush 3 to give the monster texture. (Fig.07)



Fig.07



Fig.08

I create a new layer on the top and start working on the monster by adding more detail. I work on this first because the monster is the main focus of the image. (Fig.08)

When I am happy with the development of the monster I turn my attention to the environment. (Fig.09)



Fig.09



Fig.10

I continue to work on the environment and to develop the desired atmosphere. On a separate

layer I paint evaporation and some light so you can disable it or change it later in the process if you decide to. (Fig.10)

When I was happy with the painting of the environment, to add some detail I started using textures that I found on <http://>

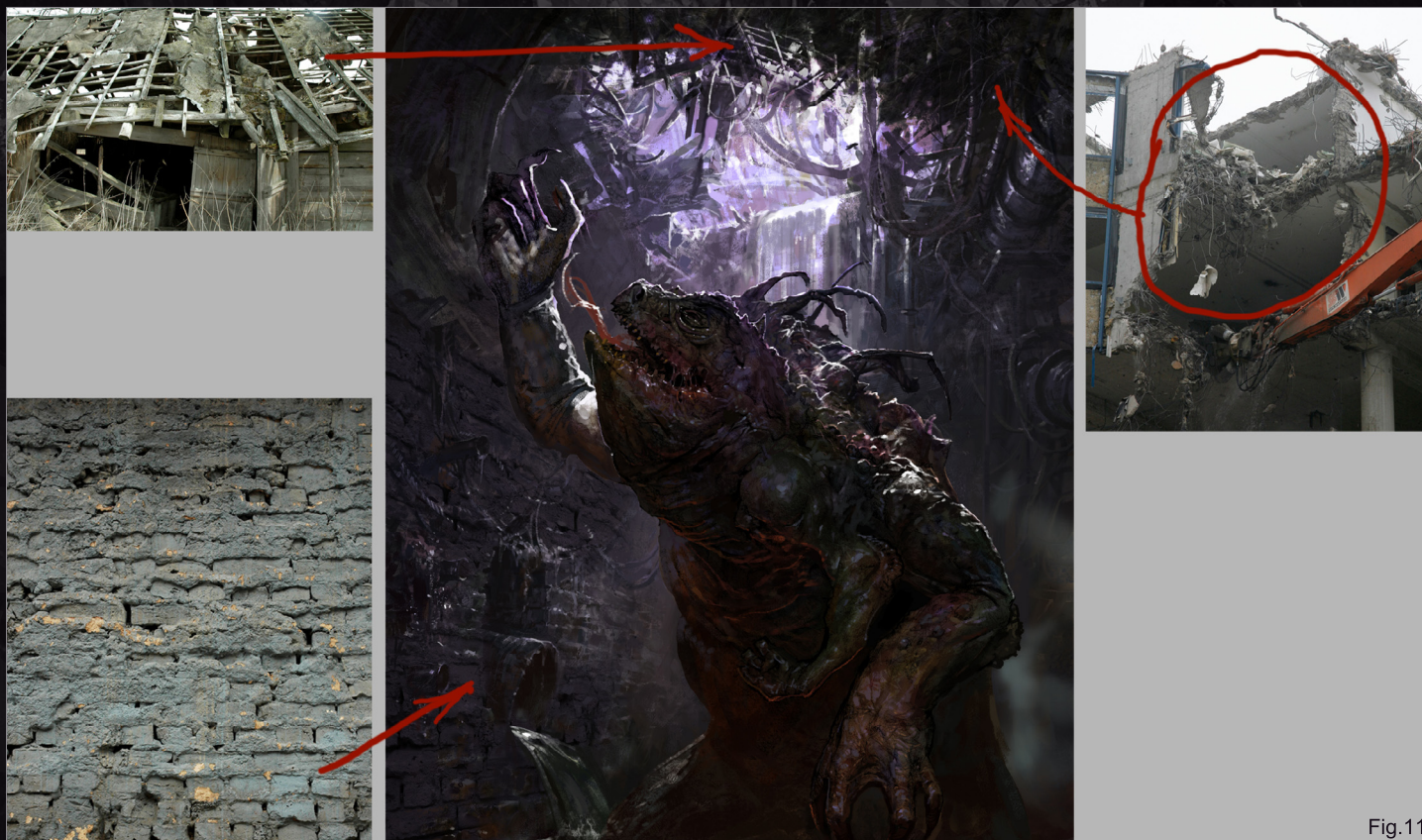


Fig.11

freetextures.3dtotal.com/. Before I added them I bleached them and chose the parameters of the layer soft light and transform and deleted the parts that were not required. (Fig.11)

This is the same as Fig11 but without the textures alongside so you can see the image clearly. (Fig.12)

To create the final image there was still more painting that needed to be done. To finalize the image I used all the brushes I listed at the beginning. I added the evaporation and the dust that you can see in the light, to do this I used brush 6. I think this helps give the final image more of an atmosphere. When I was happy that I had finished this picture I string together all the layers from the top and in the resulting layer, I used the filter Sharpen \ Smart Sharpen. This will give the completed image a more precise look. Finally, I created a new layer and filled it in a gray color (in the table color picker I made the parameter B: 50%). Then I added filter Noise \ Add Noise (amount: 400%) and used the filter Stylize \ Diffuse, and in the parameters of the layer made Soft Light and Opacity: 15%. (Fig.13)

Andrei Pervukhin

For more from this artist visit:

<http://pervandr.deviantart.com/gallery/>

or contact them at:

earfirst@gmail.com



Fig.12

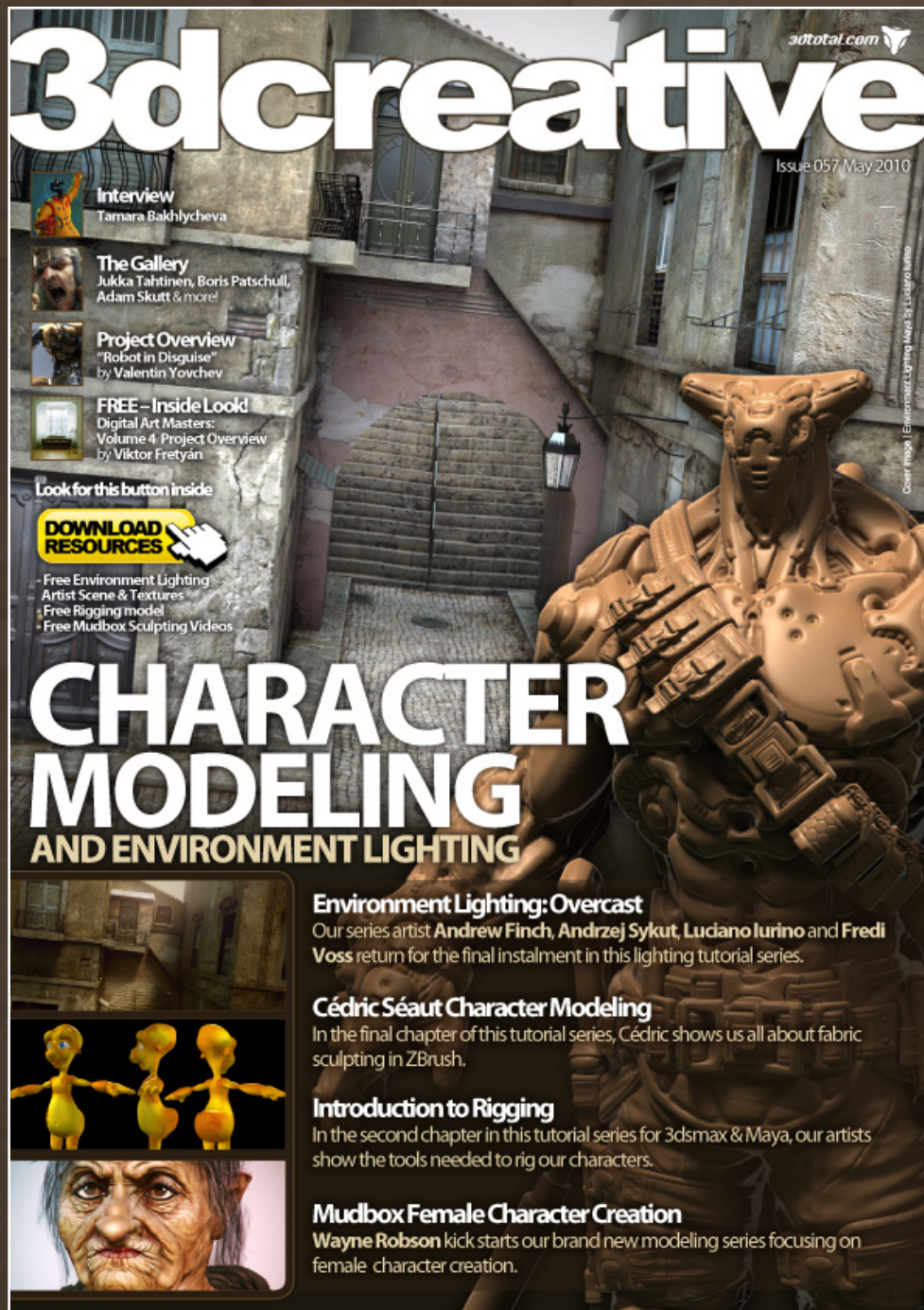


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THE CONFRONTATION

MAKING OF BY JONE L. LEUNG

This month's Making Of is brought to us by Jone L. Leung, he explains to us how he created this tense confrontation between man and beast, and he tells us how he used trial and error to get the composition he was aiming for.

"Photoshop may make an artist much faster, but that doesn't necessarily translate you into a better artist."



The Confrontation

Software Used: Photoshop

Step 01

Hello, for this making of, I will try my best to backtrack the steps that I took to complete my image, The Confrontation, for issue 48. I've always been inspired and fascinated by dinosaurs and prehistoric creatures, so for this painting, I wanted to create an adventure based fantasy piece. With that idea in mind I started off with a simple line drawing, just to get the pose, gesture, expression, and anatomy of the dinosaur. Keep in mind that since this is a personal piece, I didn't bother doing any thumbnails or pre-planning, since I had everything pretty much in my head and just wanted to start painting as early as possible. Needless to say, skipping this process did present me with a couple of roadblocks along the process so do keep in mind that thumbnails and idea sketching are crucial especially if your work is for a client. Also doing multiple thumbnails gives you more options to choose from, whether for yourself or for a client. I wasn't too sure about the composition at this stage because of my rush to jump right in, and it caused me to go in circles, so a great way to avoid this and save time is to simply



Fig.01

give your-self more options in the beginning (Fig.01). The brush that I used to do most of the preliminary drawing is basically a default round brush built into Photoshop as shown in Fig.01a. The settings are pretty basic, and I find that this brush is fairly versatile at this stage to lay down ideas and make quick changes.

to be more aggressive and meaner, so I gave him an opened mouth as part of my idea was to have it growl at his newfound prey. The dinosaur itself is not anatomically accurate, being that I wanted some creativity and artistic ownership rather than copy a real dinosaur. It was more fun for me that way. (Fig.02)

Step 02

In this step, I felt that his expression wasn't really what I had in mind. I wanted the beast

Step 03

At this point, I decided on most of the composition, placing the figure on the far upper

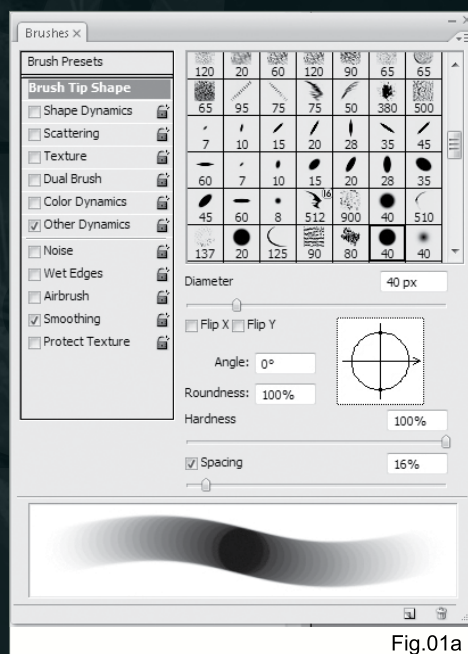


Fig.01a



Fig.02

left corner on top of these giant banyan roots that I wanted to incorporate into this piece. The roots are enormous and marvelous structures, and if you've seen them in person you'll know what I'm talking about. What I want to show is basically a square-off between man and beast, so at this stage I was deciding on the placement mostly, and how to integrate forest elements into the painting without causing tangents that will disturb the "flow" of the image. (Fig.03)

Step 04

The early composition did involve observant monkeys hanging on trees if you look closely at the upper right hand corner, and for some odd reason, this idea crossed my mind that another figure should be sort of riding the beast, or controlling its actions. That really didn't go over too well, since the scale of the painting meant that the dinosaur would be gigantic, thus making its surroundings more detailed than what I wanted to show. Another decision that was made was to crop the left side of the image so that there would be less space between the man and the beast, because I wanted a more dramatic feel. At this point, I'm still using the default round brush and painting in black and white. (Fig.04)

Step 05

It was then time to throw down some color, and to indicate general forms and shapes. Using a combination of multiply, overlay, screen, and soft light, I gave some starting base colors to the forest, dinosaur, and the figure. These layer modes are useful for laying in basic colors without covering up the line work. If you think in line like I do, this technique is extremely helpful. Depending on how you think, you may prefer starting off with line art or you may choose to immediately use solid color to block in shapes, masses, and just go nuts. Either way is fine, it is all a matter of comfort and finding whatever method works in your favor. For me, I find it easier to conceptualize and see things in line. (Fig.05)



Fig.03



Fig.04



Fig.05

Step 06

Using a few layers to build up the colors gradually, I continued to push some of these base colors in order to make the image pop more. I was going for a late afternoon, early evening atmosphere, so I wanted everything to have a dark blue-green tinted overcast, with a primary focal area bit brightly defined and lit. For now, it seems to be where the dinosaur is standing. The colors are quite saturated right now, but that will be changed later on. Also, I decided to change the rock on the left and add some trees in front of and behind the dinosaur in order to define this environment a bit further. (Fig.06)



Fig.06

Step 07

This step is a bit of a jump I know, but from here on out it was a process of straight forward painting. Just a lot of time and trying to find what I want within the picture. Many additions such as clothing on the figure, details in the rocks, leaves, and trees that helped the image come together. I made the dinosaur much bigger, to heighten the effect of the narrative. Sometimes you just have to push paint or in this case pixels around until whatever it is you want starts to unfold. Another pointer that helps is to really observe what you want to illustrate. Try to understand what it is you're drawing or painting from a color, form, and shape standpoint (Fig.07). Sometimes it's not just about replicating what is in front of you.



Fig.07

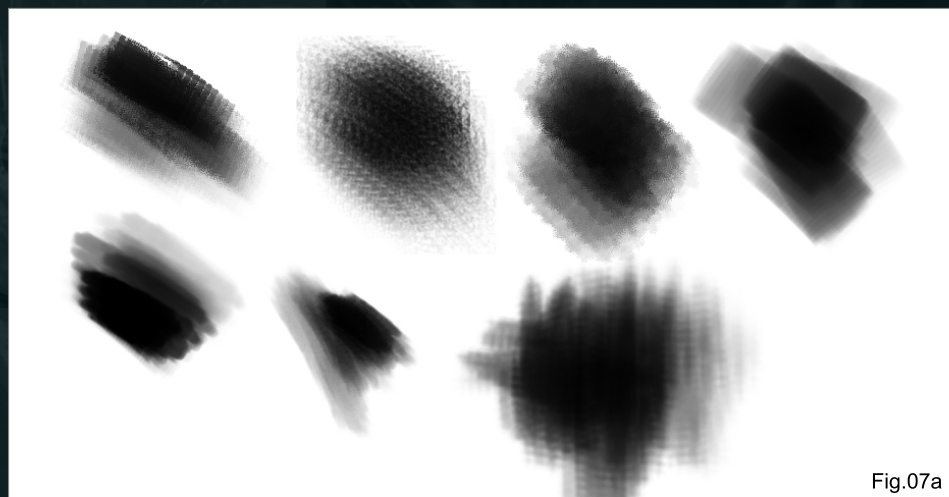


Fig.07a

Several custom brushes were made from scratch in order to make the textures a little more personal, in order to get away from the traditional round brushed look that Photoshop has, nothing against that look since I myself do it like that sometimes, but I wanted something that felt more organic. Many different brushes can be variations of the chalk brush built into the program, tweaked with either shape dynamics, texture or the dual brush options checked on or off. So have fun and just play around with it. (Fig.07a)

Step 08

More painting. Here I added indications of scaly dinosaur skin, and brightened the focal area a bit more. The image overall has a warm overtone to it, something that I don't want so I will fix that later. (Fig.08)

Step 09

Here, I decided to brighten the dinosaurs head as well as provide some sort of ambient lighting to the rest of the ground plane that surrounds the focal area. An overlay layer with a light de-saturated color was applied over where I wanted the light source to be. It's important not to overdo this, since it will look really cheesy and obvious if not done with care. I also glazed over the edges around the painting with a darker color set to multiply in order to frame it, bringing out the composition even more. Doing this allows the viewer to distinguish more clearly where I want their focus to be drawn. (Fig.09)

Step 10

This is where I made a major change. Previously, I felt the key color to be a little too warm and reddish for my liking, and so I decided to apply color balance and curves adjustment layers over the entire painting. You'll notice that after this was done, it resembles closely the final image. These layer modes are great in a sense that it can allow you to sit back and choose what you do and do not want. Keep in mind that it takes several passes to get to the results that you want and it is by no means a quick fix. It still takes an understanding of lighting, and color to make it work. Photoshop may make an artist much faster, but that doesn't necessarily translate you into a better artist. Additionally, these solutions offer much more flexibility compared to the traditionally approach of painting over it, although that wouldn't be too bad either. Maybe, someday I'll choose to do an entire digital painting on one layer without using any of the options available. Right now that sounds scary but that will be fun and challenging. =) (Fig.10)



Fig.08



Fig.09



Fig.10

Step 11

More painting done here again. I noticed the dinosaur's leg didn't feel integrated so I decided to cover it up with some long grass. Also, I felt the figure's shirt was too bright so I went ahead and darkened that area too. (Fig.11)

Step 12

I decided that the dinosaur needed something to make it a bit different so I went ahead and painted in some horns on its back and head region. I continued to add details here and there, without zooming in too much in order to have a complete view of the picture. Zooming in too frequently can make one lose attention to how the entire image is working out as a whole. The painting up close is actually quite chaotic and loose. I applied some backlighting to the figure as well, reflecting some of the local colors from the surroundings. From here on out it just became a process of nitpicking, changing and



Fig.11

adding details, micro-composing certain areas so that tangents don't occur, and darkening and brightening specific areas to make it pop out more. That's about it I guess. Hopefully this made some sense and it helped you picked up

a thing or two. Feel free to shoot me an email if anything seems confusing. If you know another way of doing things, I'd love to learn. Thanks for reading! (Fig.12)



Fig.12



Jone L. Leung

For more from this artist visit:

<http://www.lwcl.darkfathom.com>

or contact them at:

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DIGITAL ART MASTERS VOLUME 4

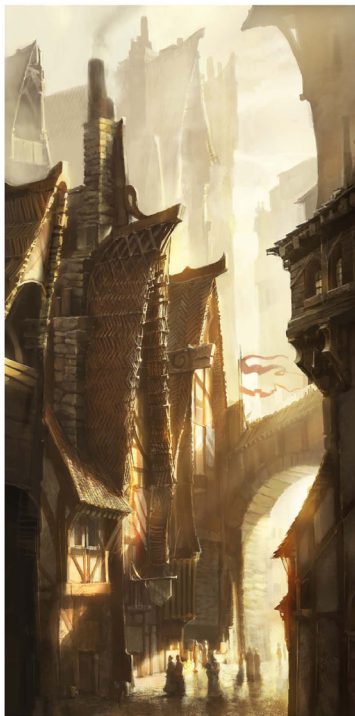
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This month we feature:

"The Back-Alley"
by Roberto F. Castro





THE BACK-ALLEY

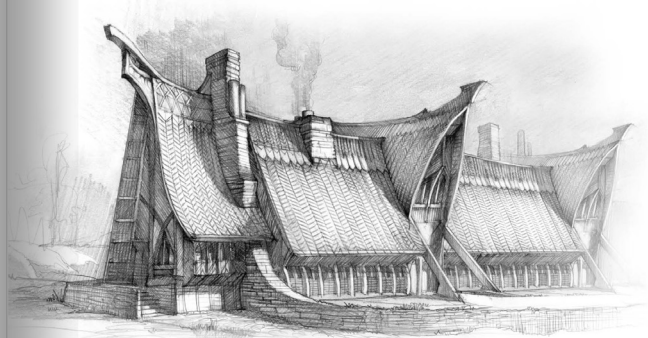
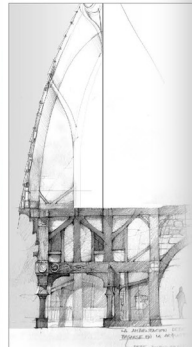
BY ROBERTO F. CASTRO

SOFTWARE USED: Photoshop CS3



INTRODUCTION

The intention with my paintings is always to create a good concept. In this picture I was trying to evoke an atmosphere that could transport the observer to a different place and age. The idea was to create a narrow location where the architecture was the unique element that defined the space. I did some architectural sketches to find a perfect balance between fantasy and medieval styles (Fig.01a – b). These drawings were helpful to get a clear concept about the architectural style, but the idea of *The Back-Alley* was more the "space" itself. Right from the beginning, the intention was to give the same importance to the architecture as well as the space.



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DRAWING TECHNIQUE

Regarding my painting technique, I have created around twenty brushes that I use in my work. This image was one of the first I did with a graphic tablet, so I didn't use strange or specific brush designs. The tool I use most of the time is a simple brush with pressure opacity and a light irregular texture that avoids a sharp artificial finish. With this picture I preferred using vertical flattened shapes to simulate a perspective effect, and the vertical lines were painted thinner than the horizontal ones (Fig.02).

I start my drawings with a medium-sized document that I increase as the image progresses. In terms of workflow, I try not to focus on only one area of the piece but instead work on maintaining the same amount of detail throughout. I put down loose forms of color which I gradually add detail to as I advance through the painting. I've selected four images to illustrate this working process for this particular image (Fig.3a – d).

I'm not going to center my explanation on my drawing technique as it's not an important element in the scene. This image has more important things to discuss, so I'm going to focus the rest of my article on composition, color and lighting concepts.

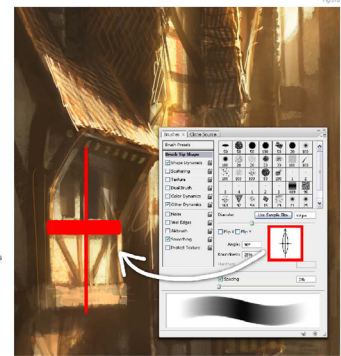


Fig.02

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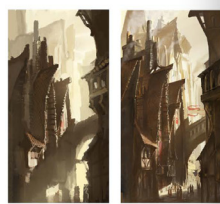
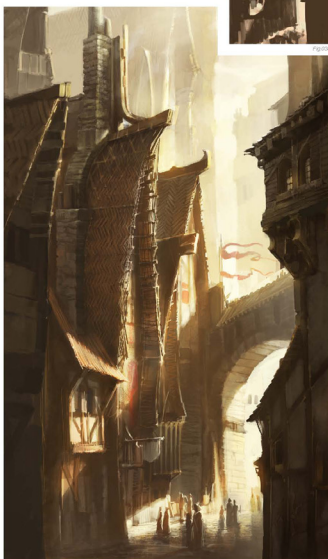
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The following shots of the "The Back-Alley" book pages are featured here in full-resolution and can be read by zooming in...

COMPOSITION

I think too many Photoshop layers make the drawing process difficult, giving an artificial appearance to the painting. In this scene I worked with three main layers (Fig.04): the building close-up on the right (red), the medium distanced houses that border the alley (blue) and the background with buildings in the distance (yellow). It was a good decision to create the layers depending on the depth in the scene because I could easily control the color saturation and brightness of each layer to simulate the effect of distance.



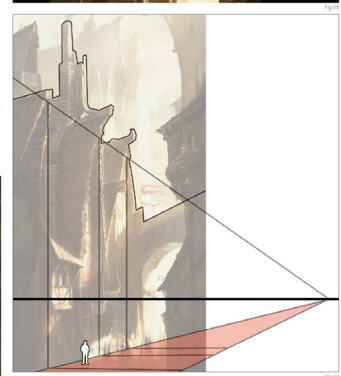
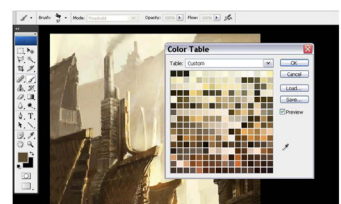
I used the color and composition to keep a general vision of the image, and I painted the entire image with a small range of colors (Fig.05). The afternoon sunlight coats the building surfaces with reddish and golden tones. The horizon line is located approximately in the lower third of the height of the buildings (that is, if the observer is

on the balcony) (Fig.06). This perspective allowed me to contemplate all the buildings from one angle without a strange or forced perspective. The image also has a vertical composition, and the pointed and stylized architecture is over-sized compared with the people walking on the street (their equivalent to ten floored structures), but this isn't a problem – the scene evokes an unreal and oniric feel.

LIGHT & SHADOW

One thing that I find incredibly important in this kind of semi-realistic scene is the treatment of light. I like to emphasize light in my pictures. I think that creating lighting effects to give the scene a dramatic and magical appearance is essential in order to reach a satisfactory result. In the dark alley the light passes through the buildings to illuminate the space. It's a great moment! In some way, the observer can guess the time of the day, and with this theatrical light I am directing the viewer where I want him to look.

I created the effect with a layer set in Overlay blending mode (Fig.07). I used a pale yellow to lighten the building surface; the difference can be noted (Fig.08a – b). The shadowed zones acquire an orange brightness that simulates the sun's reflection. It's useful to include other layers and brushes with different mix types, such as



Overlay or Multiply blending modes, which in turn provide good lighting and shading effects without sacrificing any of the details of the drawing.

This image has harsh lighting conditions, which I've represented with two plain colors (Fig.09). It's very important to understand how light and shadow work. In a more detailed view the differences are evident. The direct light reveals the sharpened contour of the objects and the brushstrokes are better defined (Fig.10); on the other hand, the darker areas are roughly painted. As hard to believe as it may seem, this technique is helpful in order to create a realistic ambience. Unconsciously, in the real world, the observer usually gives more importance to the illuminated areas of objects,

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and the decision to give more detail to these areas is an important and difficult task in any painting.

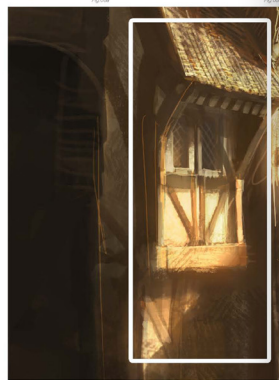
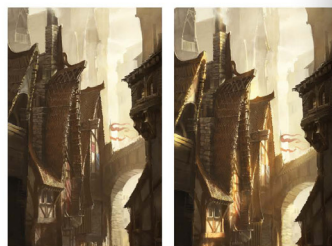
In *The Back-Alley* many areas are low in detail. I think that an artwork is finished when the artist reaches the objectives he has in mind, and this statement is one of the key points of any artistic work. Some illustrations do not need a high level of detail. In many cases success doesn't depend on the hours of work detailing parts of the scene without any aesthetic criterion!

CONCLUSION

In the end, I reached my goal. The final result is interesting. The challenge was to define a space with a



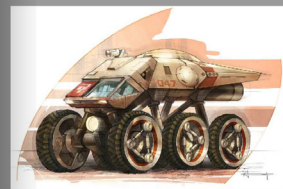
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fantasy style building. As an architect, I think that the light is the essence of the architecture. The empty space and the solid elements have the same importance. However, the true protagonist is the alley itself, not the architecture. I don't think this image has a refined style, but the painting technique doesn't matter – a strong idea is an essential key to the success of an image.

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ARTIST PORTFOLIO



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